

# BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY

1783—1915

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## INTRODUCTION

WHEN we speak of Britain's Colonial policy a critic might at once object that Great Britain has never had a Colonial policy. By sheer good fortune, it might be maintained, she stumbled into possession of fertile places in various parts of the earth and has succeeded in retaining them. There is a certain measure of truth in this contention. The British Empire is undoubtedly due to the political genius, the enterprise, the independent spirit and the initiative of individuals, rather than to the constant and enlightened pursuit of a definite goal by the British Government. Nevertheless, as we view it, the history of Great Britain's Colonial policy since 1783 is the history of an evolutionary process in which there are three marked stages.

During the first period the mother country, disillusioned and disappointed, left the entire control of the Colonies nominally to the Secretary of State charged with their administration, in reality to the permanent officials in the Colonial Office. Thus ruled from Downing Street, they came to resent the interference of 'Mr. Mother Country' in their concerns, and clamoured for Responsible Government as the only permanent remedy of their political, economic and social disorders.

Their appeal was supported in England by a school of brilliant Radicals, described by one of them as 'the theorists of 1830,' who insisted that self-government was 'the *sine qua non* of a tolerable colonial existence.' Local autonomy, they maintained, would prove the link forged by Liberty to bind the Empire happily together. Timidly and half-heartedly the British Government responded to these arguments from English Liberals and Colonial reformers. Those colonists capable of managing their own affairs were conceded the boon they sought.

We thus pass into the second stage which witnessed the devolution of the Imperial authority. This is essentially a dynamic period, a time of growth and development. The Colonies, free to pursue what they conceived to be their own interests, shaped their respective careers as they saw fit; and finally gratified the sentiment of nationalism by resolving themselves into larger entities clothed with greater powers. Their development was perfectly natural. Federation was only self-government writ large as a result of the enjoyment of perfect liberty. Friction between them and the mother country ceased, and they became more and more conscious of their indebtedness to her. But the statesmen in England, believing their god to be independence, regarded them with chilling indifference, and, when they could not shift for themselves, as a burden of a particularly onerous kind.

Changes in the international situation and in the relative power of England, however, led them to appreciate the value of the oversea Dominions, which had become less inclined to separate as

the possibility for so doing became greater. They displayed a desire to draw closer to the mother country, which she encouraged by recognizing their aspirations and inviting them to participate with her in discussions of the problems of the Empire. As the detested rule from Downing Street marks the commencement of England's Colonial policy since the Peace of Versailles, the Imperial Conference, as at present understood, fittingly symbolizes its character to-day. It marks the third stage in the evolutionary process to which we have alluded. England's Colonial policy has become, as far as the self-governing Dominions are concerned, one of friendly co-operation. The Crown Colonies are still governed from Downing Street, but, with the presence of men of the calibre of Sir Charles Lucas and Dr. A. B. Keith at the 'Office,' the rule of 'Mr. Mother Country' differs vastly from the administration which Charles Buller pilloried for all time.

If we regard these salient characteristics of England's Colonial policy from the human point of view they become perfectly sound, natural, and rational. Centralization of authority, devolution of authority, and co-operation form a proper sequence. In any well-ordered family the parents' authority is for a time absolute and unquestioned. But, with the growth of the children to manhood, they are given greater and greater liberty until they leave the parents' roof and set up for themselves. There is no visible tie, but they are bound together by sentiment, the link, which, as Burke admirably described it, though light as air, is yet as strong as iron.

It is perfectly natural for the parents to make

many concessions without any apparent *quid pro quo*, the children seeming to receive everything and give nothing in return. In reality, however, the parents win their affection and their gratitude, to which they give expression by rallying around when those parents are threatened by trouble or overcome by disaster. The mother country has done much for her Colonies. They have silently acknowledged their indebtedness, and have shown the world that they are not ungrateful in such times of stress as the Soudan war, the Boer war, and the terrible conflagration now raging in Europe.

This human side of the Imperial question must be kept in mind in any discussion as to the future organization of the Empire. Children, when they have attained maturity, are very sensitive as to their independence and resent parental patronage or the assertion of parental ascendancy, but are proud and grateful if admitted on an equal footing into the parents' councils. On these terms, and these only, will the self-governing Dominions consult with the United Kingdom as to the solution of Imperial problems, and co-operate with its Government for the promotion of Imperial interests.

We have next to observe that each of these stages in the evolution of Britain's Colonial policy coincides with the ascendancy of certain fundamental ideas in the minds of English statesmen. In 1783 the Mercantile System still prevailed. It was the outcome of the desire for a self-contained and complete national life, to secure which the Navigation Laws had been passed and the commerce of the Empire had been regulated by the Parliament sitting at Westminster.

But Europe was on the eve of a new era. The old idea that the State should regulate the religious, social, economic, and political life of the individual was giving place to the distinctly modern idea that men should be free to think, to act, to govern themselves as they saw fit. The commercial regulations which were so consonant with the old ideas contributed more than any other factor to bring about the Declaration of American Independence, which was at bottom a claim for 'natural liberty' in politics. It is significant that the year of this Declaration witnessed the publication of the *Wealth of Nations* in which Adam Smith pleaded for 'natural liberty' in industry, and severely criticized the principles of the old Mercantile System.

But the English Government failed to grasp the lesson of the War of American Independence. They ceased to try to raise revenue in the Colonies for Imperial purposes. Instead of realizing the limits to which people of British descent would go in order to secure their 'natural liberty' in politics, they were filled with a lively distrust of democratic institutions, and centralized the control of the Colonies to a degree hitherto unequalled in Colonial history. The commercial aspect of the Mercantile System also continued, with slight modifications, for over fifty years. Curiously enough, the Colonists made no complaint about its commercial restrictions, but they did demand their political liberty in imperative accents. Once that was granted, they soon realized that it was incomplete while the existing fiscal policy prevailed.

Their demand for self-government, however,

synchronized with the repudiation of the old commercial policy and the adoption of Free Trade by the mother country. These two events, which are in reality manifestations of the same fundamental idea, mark a new stage in the evolution of Britain's Colonial policy. The spirit of Liberty was now everywhere triumphant. Shackles on human freedom—social, political, and economic—were knocked off. Slavery was abolished, transportation was discontinued, Responsible Government was granted, the old preferences to colonial products were swept away, the Navigation Laws were repealed, and the Colonies were given the control of their fiscal policies.

They rejoiced in the possession of the liberal measure of self-government which they had only won after a long and strenuous struggle with Colonial Secretaries like Lord Grey. In their several polities many of the ideas which the nineteenth century had inherited from the French Revolution found practical expression. In accordance with one of these, the principle of nationality, they have gradually coalesced into Federations and a Union, and have consequently been invested with powers of government becoming their status and their stature.

But the Imperial Government was determined that the privileges which it thus bestowed on them should be attended by their correlative responsibilities. It therefore insisted that they should provide for their local defence and control the affairs of the natives within their confines. Indeed, English statesmen of all parties were weary of Empire. Dependencies, especially to the Manchester School, seemed merely a source of

trouble and expense since the monopoly of their trade had been abandoned in obedience to economic laws of eternal validity.

Consequently, when, as in South Africa during this period, the frontiers of Britain's territory advanced, for reasons over which they had practically no control, the Imperial Government were always ready to adopt measures likely to diminish or relieve them of their unwelcome burdens. Their policy, therefore—varying according to the triumphs of different political parties, themselves due to the triumph of Freedom—was vacillating and inconsistent. Englishmen of all political faiths between 1850 and 1880 were convinced that the self-governing Colonies were bent on separation—the logical outcome of self-government and Free Trade.

But 'family relations are neither logical nor illogical: they are human.' The gloomy forebodings of the Sixties have been proved groundless. When we come to the third stage in the evolutionary process we find that the most cordial relations exist between the mother country and her self-governing Dominions. The latter, cherishing above aught else their national autonomy, have displayed the liveliest desire to co-operate with the Government of the United Kingdom for the good of the Empire. The former, sympathetic towards their aspirations and appreciative of their value, has recognized them as 'sister states,' and is prepared to ally herself with them for the preservation and advancement of their mutual interests.

Co-operation has been the keynote of the most recent Conferences between the responsible heads

of the national Governments. The future organization of the Empire has yet to be determined, and it will be determined by the 'sister states' working in collaboration. Two ideals, Imperial Federation and a Britannic Co-operative Alliance, have been contending for mastery. The former, though very attractive, is impracticable; the latter has scope and vista. The one is more popular at Home, the other in the Dominions. Throughout the whole Empire there are many who postulate Imperial Preference as the enabling condition of an organic and permanent union, and it is compatible with the second of these two ideals.

We may not lift the veil which shrouds the Future, but of this we may be sure. It is idle to formulate an elaborate constitutional scheme and endeavour to mould the Empire accordingly. The British political genius does not work in that way. Let us have no break with the past, let the evolutionary process which has now culminated in that admirable and unique Assembly, the Imperial Conference, continue. By recognizing, consciously or unconsciously, the human element in the Empire, by maintaining the greatest elasticity and flexibility in our Imperial organization, by giving Liberty the fullest scope, by allowing the Individual to go forward and fulfil his mission, by exercising a wise opportunism, the happiest results have ensued.

Whatever the future organization of the Empire is to be, it must be consistent, if it is to be successful, with those principles which have determined the evolution of the Empire up to the present, and, if it be grounded upon those prin-



ciples, it would seem that England's Colonial policy will finally result in the formation of an Empire of tremendous strength and potentialities under democratic custodianship, whose component parts will be bound together by co-operative alliances.

# The Policy of Centralized Control

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## CHAPTER I

### THE FEELING IN ENGLAND TOWARDS THE COLONIES AFTER 1783

THE year 1783 was the darkest in the long history of the British Empire. It witnessed the cession to the English colonies in America of that perfect independence which rent asunder the great Imperial structure whose foundations had been laid by the self-sacrificing enthusiasm of the members of the London Company and the practical genius of John Smith. That foundation had been buttressed and strengthened by the accession of new forces, which, albeit they had been compelled to leave England for conscience' sake, were yet bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of their mother country.

The great rupture. Disappointment and disillusionment in England.

British freedom was the life-blood of the politics which these oversea Englishmen established. With the exception of their foreign trade, they had complete liberty to manage their own affairs in their own way. When, owing to parochial jealousies and internal dissensions, they were unable to cope with their French and their red-skinned neighbours, they had been freely accorded such

## 16 THE FEELING IN ENGLAND TOWARDS

relief as it was in the power of the British Fleet and British soldiers to afford. At length, in 1763, after the expenditure of much British blood and British money, they were entirely relieved of these possible checks to their prosperous development.

To thoughtful men in England and America it had come to seem at once unbecoming to the dignity and independence of the colonist, and unjust to the English taxpayer, that the former, so much richer on the average than the latter, should yet rely entirely upon him to shoulder the great burden of his distant cousin's defence. When George Grenville insisted that the American colonists should contribute towards the cost of that defence, when Charles Townshend passed his detested statute to achieve the same object, they were, in the opinion of the English people, merely making a just and moderate request for a common sacrifice for a mutual benefit,—a request, moreover, which was at once legal and righteous. The colonists not only harshly rejected these proposals, but they invoked the assistance of England's greatest European enemy that they might emerge triumphant from the matricidal strife in which they had engaged, rather than acquiesce in the demands of their mother country.

In view of their temper and training, it was inexpedient to attempt to coerce them. Posterity must ever lament the wrong-headedness of George III, the pliant good nature of Lord North, and the unhappy combination of circumstances which prevented the wisdom of Edmund Burke finding legislative expression, and debarred Chat-ham from the Prime Ministership, whence he

might have appealed to the Americans, as Englishmen, to abandon the disastrous course upon which they had embarked. But contemporary Englishmen, with a few notable exceptions, were embittered and grievously disappointed by the ingratitude and selfishness of their kinsmen across the Atlantic.

And yet the experience of history seemed to point to such a rupture as a fatal necessity. The great Empires of the past—Grecian, Roman, Spanish, Dutch, and French—had all declined and fallen. Now, as if to emphasize that lesson, the British Colonies, like ripe fruit, had dropped away from the parent tree upon attaining maturity. Why should the British people claim exception at the hands of destiny? They were disposed to witness, with resignation, the dissipation of their dreams of a great British Empire, and to abandon the hope of creating a permanent structure of that character. Before the eyes of those in authority lay Captain Cook's account of the potentialities of the eastern coast of Australia. J. M. Matra directed their attention to it anew, when he suggested that it pointed to a suitable home for those Americans who had remained loyal to the Imperial connexion during the recent war. But the Government were not inclined to redress their loss in the West by the creation of another nation in the vast and newly discovered territory to the South. Australia was deemed well situated for a convict settlement. Such was the depth of their disillusionment! Colonial affairs were no longer considered of first-rate importance and were practically entrusted to the Colonial Office.

## 18 THE FEELING IN ENGLAND TOWARDS

Moreover, England was soon sucked into the vortex of the great European war. Her Government and her people were absorbed for twenty years in the task of smashing the power of Napoleon, and, incidentally, of establishing her commercial and maritime supremacy. Other concerns of State, of which those affecting the colonies were not the most important, receded into the background. And yet, although there was no throbbing desire for expansion in any way comparable to that which was so characteristic of the Elizabethan era, England almost unconsciously found herself, at the end of that war, the possessor of many square miles of new territory which, together with those beneath her flag after the Peace of Versailles, constituted an Empire unique in its proportions, diversities, and potentialities.

The attacks of the enemy upon Canada had been repulsed, and that vast dominion, greater in its surface area than the United States, was preserved for the subjects of the Crown; Australia, almost equal in size to Europe, together with unnumbered islands in the Pacific, remained a British possession; a firm foothold had been secured on the African continent at the Cape of Good Hope; in Central and South America the Union Jack was to be found at British Honduras and British Guiana respectively; Jamaica, Dominica, the Bermudas, the Barbadoes and the Bahama Islands, and the most important members of the Leeward and Windward Groups, acknowledged her sway; while she had retained and strengthened

England's  
preoccupa-  
tion with  
the war  
against  
France  
(1793-  
1815).

The  
British  
Empire  
in 1815.

her dominion over India, and even ruled for a period the distant Island of Java.

The control of these vast territories scattered so freely over the face of the Earth, inhabited by people speaking different languages, wedded to different customs, animated by different ideals, cherishing different traditions, devoted to different religions, pursuing different industries, and advancing from different stages of civilization, was nominally entrusted to a member of the Cabinet who was responsible to the majority of those who represented the public opinion of the United Kingdom. In reality the centre of authority was elsewhere.

The idea of appealing to His Majesty's Government and of being controlled by the leaders of the majority of the representatives of enlightened public opinion in England was a mere figment of the imagination. The leagues of ocean which rolled between the colonists and the mother country, and the scarcity of news relative to them, separated them from the ordinary interests of Englishmen. The average member of the House of Commons was much more interested in a railway or turnpike bill than in any measure affecting the most vital interests of the most important colonies. The most profound ignorance sometimes existed even in informed circles as to their exact situation. A Prince of the Blood, on inquiring from a Lord Chancellor, renowned for his knowledge, as to the position of South Australia was informed that it was 'somewhere near Botany Bay.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield's *Art of Colonization*, p. 47.

Under these circumstances, the custom gradually grew up of delegating legislative powers anent the colonies to the ministerial authority charged with their administration. The power of making laws was thus abstracted from both the Colonial and Imperial Legislatures and entrusted to a member of the Executive.

The extensive powers nominally invested in the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

‘Parliament exercises hardly the slightest efficient control over the administration or the making of laws for the colonies,’ wrote Buller.<sup>1</sup> ‘In nine cases out of ten it merely registers the edicts of the Colonial Office in Downing Street.’ It was mere persiflage to speak of the honour of the Crown, the wisdom of the House of Commons, and the corrective influence of enlightened public opinion. In point of fact, the source and fountain of all authority, the centre of the supremacy of the mother country was to be found ‘in the large house which forms the end of that cul-de-sac so well known by the name of Downing Street.’

The Colonial policy, however, was generally not determined by the member of the Cabinet who presided over that office. ‘This great officer held the most constantly shifting position on the shifting scene of official life.’ Between 1827 and 1840 ten different Secretaries of State held the seals of the Colonial Government.

The difficulties and perplexities of the Secretaries of State for the Colonies.

Some of them, like Lord Glenelg, were hopelessly incompetent; but, even had they been men of first-class ability, they could not have satisfactorily discharged the duties of their office.

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield's *Art of Colonization*, p. 283.

Often without any previous experience they were suddenly called from another Department to deal with numberless technical, and, to them, uninteresting questions of detail about which they were naturally entirely ignorant. How were they to discriminate between important and unimportant matters? How could they be expected to know the accepted policy of the Department with respect to the host of questions presented to them for their decision? Above all, how could they be conversant with the public opinion of the particular colony concerned? Even a resolute, clear-thinking statesman like Lord Grey, who had been interested in the colonies for many years, and was for five years entrusted with the administration of colonial affairs, failed repeatedly to gauge aright the feelings and desires of those whom he was honestly anxious to satisfy.

In their perplexity the ministers were obliged to appeal to the leading permanent official in their Department. He was the person The real authority into whom the mother country had shrunk. He was, in reality, the arbiter of the destinies of the widely flung colonies, and, in order to distinguish him, Charles Buller styled him 'Mr. Mother Country.' Doubtless he was a man of great diligence, intimately acquainted with the business of his office, and unremitting in the discharge of his official duties, but such a man was not equal to the task of governing an Empire. Sheltered from all responsibility to public opinion, with little personal interest in those whose fortunes he might so definitely determine, obliged to rely on second-hand and possibly one-sided information, exposed



to those sinister influences which are dissipated by freedom and publicity, 'Mr. Mother Country,' even if possessed of the highest qualifications, could not manage the local affairs of so many diverse communities either efficiently or effectively. Confusion and discontent were consequently rife.

## CHAPTER II

### THE RULE OF 'MR. MOTHER COUNTRY'

THE Colonial Office learnt little from the war of American Independence. During the first forty years of the nineteenth century the old commercial ideas prevailed; the political liberties of the colonies were more restricted than hitherto; the Colonial Office displayed the most deplorable ignorance of the local requirements and temper of those whose destinies they insisted upon controlling; the oversea Englishmen writhed under the sense that they were considered of small account by distant and irresponsible authorities eager to exploit their resources.

Owing to that incurable distrust of democratic institutions natural to conservative officials, which was strengthened by the successful struggle for Independence in America and the Revolution in France—owing, too, to circumstances peculiar to the different colonies in the early nineteenth century—the Colonial Office was adamant in its opposition to any enlargement of the self-governing powers of various colonies. The patent granted to Sir Humphrey Gilbert allowed those who settled in America under his auspices 'the privileges of free denizens and persons native of England in such ample manner as if they were

born and personally resident in the said realm of England.' Moreover they might be governed by their own laws, provided that such statutes 'conformed, as near as conveniently might be, with those of England,' and did 'not oppugn the Christian faith or in any way withdraw the people of those lands from their allegiance.' No such charter of freedom was conferred upon the Canadians, Australians, or the South Africans at the inception of their colonial life.

Conditions peculiar to each rendered them unfitted for any liberal measure of self-government.

Conditions in the colonies unfavourable for self-government. The vast majority of the inhabitants of Canada were Frenchmen who had hitherto been denied any voice in the management of their own concerns, and whose religion was prone to engender the habit of intellectual obedience. Australia was purely a penal settlement, subject, and rightly so, to the rigid discipline of a benevolent autocrat. Cape Colony had only been taken from the Dutch on account of its convenient position and strategic importance. It was not intended to be a colony in the usual sense of the term, and the British Government watched the radiation of their influence in South Africa from that centre with growing disquietude. But it may be doubted, in view of the ideas then regnant and in the light of subsequent events, whether, had the circumstances been otherwise, these dependencies would have received the boon so freely bestowed on the elder colonies. The policy of 'Mr. Mother Country' was to concentrate all authority in Downing Street.

In 1791 Pitt, acting wisely under the prevailing

circumstances, divided Canada into two provinces, and provided each with the complete legislative apparatus. The senior dominion thus obtained Representative Government, but the substance of power remained in the hands of the Executive, which was responsible to the Colonial Office. Until 1818 the Canadian revenue was not equal to the expenditure, which, in the opinion of Milnes, the Governor-General, was ‘a fortunate circumstance.’ ‘There is reason to apprehend,’ he wrote, ‘that, in case the province could be induced to tax itself in a degree equal to the calls of the Executive Government, the right of regulation and control over the whole would probably be aspired to by the Assembly, which could not fail of producing the most injurious consequences to the Colonial Government, rendering it from that moment dependent on the will of a popular Assembly.’ This view was cordially endorsed by those in Downing Street, who were convinced of the wisdom of avoiding these ‘most injurious consequences’ by preserving the irresponsibility of the Executive to the Colonial Legislature.

It was not until 1842 that the mother state in Australia received even Representative Government. Until 1823 the Governor combined in his own person the functions of the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary. In that year a nominee advisory Council, whose unofficial strength and powers were slightly increased five years later, was appointed to assist him. In that these concessions afforded some of the

The nature of the political institutions in Canada and Australia in 1830.

The supreme authority of the Colonial Governors.

principal officials in the community a constitutional opportunity of discussing their local affairs, and articulating the public opinion of their fellow taxpayers, they were a distinct step in advance. But in Australia, as in Canada and South Africa, the Governor was the true source of all authority. It is imperative, therefore, to notice the qualifications deemed satisfactory for such an important office, and the nature of the powers conferred upon the appointees during the ascendancy of 'Mr. Mother Country.'

These early Governors were usually distinguished military or naval officers, frequently destitute of

The  
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tions of  
these  
Governors,  
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treatment  
by the  
Colonial  
Office.

the slightest knowledge of the resources of the country and of the feelings, interests, and aspirations of the people over whom they were to govern. Instead of being allowed to let their intelligence prescribe the best methods of dealing with the real state of affairs

as it presented itself to them when they investigated matters in a thorough and practical manner on the spot, the omniscient and omnipotent 'Office' charged them, on their departure, with precise instructions, which were multiplied many times during the tenure of their Governorship. When they reached their destination they found no responsible Ministers of the Crown who could give them an impartial account of the exact state of affairs. Sometimes they fell into the hands of an interested bureaucracy, who took advantage of their privileged position to advance their own interests. Frequently, when, with the knowledge and insight of the man on the spot they ventured to depart from the dogmatic instructions

of their distant superiors, or advocated a different policy to that favoured at headquarters, they were sharply reprimanded, recalled, or obliged to resign. From time to time their downfall and disgrace were deliberately engineered by a powerful colonial clique which had influence in Downing Street, with whom they had clashed. Many of the ablest Governors the oversea Dominions ever had—among whom Lord Durham, Governor Macquarie, Governor Bourke, Sir Benjamin D’Urban, and Sir George Grey might be cited as notable instances—were thus humiliated by dull and ungrateful superiors. Consequently the wisest policy for a Governor who wished to retain his position and official reputation was to endeavour to throw as much responsibility as was possible on the Home Government. Thus, as Lord Durham pointed out,<sup>1</sup> ‘ the real vigour of the Executive ’ was ‘ essentially impaired, distance and delay weakened the force of its decisions, and the colony, in every crisis of danger and almost every detail of local management, felt the mischief of having its executive authority on the other side of the Atlantic.’

Furthermore, the Colonial Office, to the deep displeasure of the colonists, constantly overrode the legislation of their local governments. Even were their laws declared valid, there was much antecedent uncertainty and suspense. When they were vetoed, the colonists felt that their will was thwarted by a self-imposed authority less qualified than they to know their local requirements, and susceptible, too, to the pressure of selfish colonial

The colonists’ resentment of (a) the interference of ‘ Mr. Mother Country ’ with their local statutes.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Durham’s *Report*, vol. ii, p. 102 (Lucas).

factions who had influence at headquarters. They felt that they were being denied the inherent rights of Englishmen and viewed 'Mr. Mother Country's' meddlesome interference with increasing hostility.

Moreover, the oversea Englishmen felt that England regarded them with mingled contempt and condescension, and warmly resented her attitude. Anything was supposed to be good enough for the colonies. They were very convenient places for persons of tainted reputation and broken fortunes to recoup. They provided respectable asylums for worn-out officials who had sufficient influence in Downing Street to secure a comfortable colonial berth. 'The patronage of the Colonial Office,' said Charles Buller,<sup>1</sup> 'is the prey of every hungry department of our Government. On it the Horse Guards quarters its worn-out general officers as Governors; the Admiralty cribs its share, and jobs which even Parliamentary rapacity would blush to ask from the Treasury are perpetrated with impunity in the silent realm of "Mr. Mother Country."'

On arriving in the colonies such favourites of influence of a lesser degree presented their letters of recommendation to the Governor, who was obliged to discover or create a berth for them, in which, secure in the assurance of support at home, they lived easy lives. Their demeanour was very displeasing to the native-born. 'In their own estimation, and in that of a good many of the humbler colonists, they were a sort of demi-gods coming from another planet and gifted by some

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Wakefield's *Art of Colonization*, p. 292.

(b) The  
exploita-  
tion of  
their  
country  
in the  
interests  
of needy  
people in  
England.

distant and mysterious authority with the right of governing the settlers.’<sup>1</sup> Combining to protect their common interests, they formed a solid official class who tried to retain for themselves or their friends all the positions of distinction and emolument in the colonies. When they erred, they found officials tender towards officials, and, when their offence was too glaring, they were asked to send in their resignation. Gibbon Wakefield declared<sup>2</sup> that, were the light of publicity turned on to the conduct, character, and manners of such offenders, honest John Bull’s hair would stand on end.

In almost every department of its activity the Colonial Office displayed a flagrant disregard for the interests of the colony, and the grossest ignorance of their local requirements, albeit it interfered busily in their concerns. Broad acres belonging to the Crown were either given away or sold for ridiculously low prices. ‘Down to 1831 the general practice of the British Government had been to grant land for nothing and without stint as to quantity.’<sup>3</sup> Much more land was alienated than the grantees could possibly hope to reclaim from the wilderness. They made no effort to improve it, but retained possession in the hope that an increase in population would enhance its value. The failure of the colony planted in Western Australia was in a large measure due to the thoughtless and profuse distribution of the land. ‘In disposing of the waste land the Government began by granting 500,000 acres to

(c) The reckless disposal of their waste lands.

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.



one person. Then came the Governor and a few other persons, with grants of immense extent. The first grantee took his principality at the landing place, and the second, of course, could only choose his, outside of this vast property. Then the property of the second grantee compelled the third to go further off for land; and the fourth again was driven still further into the wilderness. At length, although by a very brief process, an immense territory was appropriated by a few settlers who were so effectively dispersed, that, as there were no roads or maps, scarcely one of them knew where he was. Each of them knew indeed that he was where he was positively; but his relative position, not to his neighbours but to other settlers, to the seat of government, and even to the landing place of the colony, was totally concealed from him.' <sup>1</sup>

Extensive demesnes were sometimes wedged between the homesteads of small farmers, who were thus prevented from exchanging their products, enjoying each other's society, and co-operating for their mutual advantage. The Clergy Reserves were described by the Canada Committee of 1828 'as so many portions of reserved wilderness, which had done more than any other circumstance to retard the improvement of the colony, intervening, as they did, between the occupation of actual settlers, who had no means of cutting through the woods and morasses which separated them from their neighbours.' <sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the land was so cheap that the humblest wage-earner could soon save sufficient to

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, p. 433.

<sup>2</sup> Molesworth's *Speeches*, p. 413.

become a land-owner. The supply of unskilled labour, which was so essential if large farms were to be worked, stock was to be tended satisfactorily, and other minor but necessary duties performed, was correspondingly depleted. Threatened with the economic disaster which this dearth of labour presaged, the colonists looked to 'Mr. Mother Country' to assist them by facilitating emigration.

But the Colonial Office failed to avail itself of this opportunity of rendering signal service to the

(d) The heedless and mischievous system of emigration from England. Empire. Emigrants, who had the means and courage to leave their native shores on their own initiative, had to endure frightful hardships before reaching their destination. It is regrettable that those officials, who were so persis-

tent in their interference in colonial affairs, failed to supervise the emigrant ships and the character of their personnel with equal vigilance. These vessels were ill-ventilated, ill-provisioned, overcrowded, and almost unseaworthy. They were frequently so old that it was dangerous to crowd on much sail, with the result that the voyage was unduly prolonged. The ship's food, which was coarse and unwholesome, could only be supplemented at exorbitant prices by the needy travellers. The men who sailed in the capacity of medical superintendents were often ignorant of the rudiments of their profession. On one occasion the ship's doctor, declaring that the captain had fractured his arm, although in point of fact a few muscles were merely strained, bandaged it securely. On the arrival of the vessel in port he assured a brother doctor that 'the tibia and

fibula'<sup>1</sup> were both broken. Many of the passengers died on the outward voyage, and fever was usually so prevalent among them that emigrant vessels bound for Quebec always proceeded immediately to the quarantine station at Grosse Island, a few miles below the town. Those diseased were removed to a hospital, while those not affected were landed and 'subjected to some discipline for the purpose of cleanliness.' Emigration, Charles Buller indignantly exclaimed,<sup>2</sup> aimed at little more than the shovelling out of paupers to where they might die without shocking their betters with the sight or sound of their last agony.

On one notable occasion the Imperial Government liberally assisted the settlement of five thousand colonists at Albany in South Africa, hoping thereby to relieve the English labour market, which had been flooded with unemployed owing to the stagnation of industry after the Napoleonic wars. But the chronic lack of foresight and supervision was again manifest. The immigrants were not the type the Colony needed, and were placed in its eastern portion, remote from the Dutch and in close proximity to the Kaffirs. The expansion of Great Britain in South Africa was thus begun; the racial divergence of the two sections of the white population was emphasized; collision between the natives and the British settlers was made inevitable, and the mother country was in duty bound to render them assistance should their lives be imperilled. Surely it was a most

Hapless  
spasm of  
energy.

<sup>1</sup> Durham's *Report*, vol. ii, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, p. 490.

unhappy spasm of energy! The British Government were resolutely opposed to expansion in South Africa, they were anxious to reconcile the Boers to their rule, and they were particularly averse to any quarrel with the natives.

As a last resort, colonists and others with grievances sometimes appealed in person to the officials at the Colonial Office. Charles Buller, in a famous passage, describes their unhappy experiences. ‘There are rooms in the Colonial Office,’ he wrote, ‘with old and meagre furniture,

The  
futility of  
appealing  
to ‘Mr.  
Mother  
Country.’

book-cases crammed with colonial gazettes and newspapers, tables covered with baize, and some old and crazy chairs scattered about, in which those who have personal applications to make, are doomed to wait until the interview can be obtained. Here, if perchance you should some day be forced to tarry, you will find strange anxious-looking beings, who pace to and fro in feverish impatience, or sit dejected at the table, unable in the agitation of their thoughts to find any occupation to while away their hours, and starting every time that the door opens, in hopes that the messenger is come to announce that their turn is arrived. These are men with colonial grievances. The very messengers know them, their business, and its hopelessness, and eye them with pity as they bid them wait their long and habitual period of attendance. No experienced eye can mistake their faces, once expressive of health, and confidence, and energy, now worn by hopes deferred, and the listlessness of prolonged dependence. One is a recalled Governor, boiling over with a sense of mortified

pride and frustrated policy; another, a judge, recalled for daring to resist the compact of his colony; another, a merchant whose whole property has been destroyed by some job or oversight; another, the organ of the remonstrances of some Colonial Parliament; another, a widow struggling for some pension on which her hopes of existence hang; and perhaps another is a man whose project is under consideration. Every one of these has passed hours in that dull but anxious attendance, and knows every nook and corner of this scene of his sufferings. The grievance originated probably long years ago, and bandied about between colony and home, by letter or by interview, has dragged on its existence thus far. One comes to have an interview with the Chief Secretary; one, who has tried Chief and Under Secretaries in their turn, is now doomed to waste his remonstrances on some clerk. One has been waiting days to have his first interview; another, weeks to have his answer to his memorial; another, months in expectation of the result of a reference to the colony; and some reckon the period of their suffering by years. Some are silent; some utter aloud their hopes or fears, and pour out their tale on their fellow-sufferers; some endeavour to conciliate by their meekness; some give vent to their rage, when, after hours of attendance, the messenger summons in their stead some sleek contented-looking visitor, who has sent up his name only the moment before, but whose importance as a member of Parliament, or of some powerful interest or society, obtains him an instant interview. And if by chance you should see one of them at last receive

the long-desired summons, you will be struck at the nervous reluctance with which he avails himself of the permission. After a short conference, you will generally see him return with disappointment stamped on his brow, and, quitting the office, wend his lonely way home to despair, or perhaps to return to his Colony and rebel. These chambers of woe are called the *Sighing Rooms*; and those who recoil from the sight of human suffering, should shun the ill-omened precincts.’<sup>1</sup>

The commercial policy of the Colonial Office—acquiesced in by the colonies. The centralization policy of the Colonial Office seemed productive of little but discord and dissatisfaction. In one department alone it was consistently applied without evoking a chorus of angry expostulation from beyond the seas. During the first forty years of the nineteenth century there was no dispute of any moment between the Colonial Office and the colonies as to the nature of their commercial relations. And yet, in its main outlines, England’s fiscal policy of those years differed little in its colonial aspect from that which prevailed prior to the fateful event terminated by the Peace of Versailles.

Abandonment by the Mother country of any attempt to raise revenue in the colonies for imperial purposes.

In 1778, when it was too late to avert the great disaster, Lord North, in an Act popularly termed ‘the Magna Charta of the British colonies,’ had surrendered the English Government’s claim to raise an Imperial revenue in the colonies.

By subsequent statutes the privileges of this Act were extended to the various dependencies. By the Judicature Act of 1823, for example, the Gover-

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield’s *Art of Colonization*, pp. 295–6.

nor of New South Wales was forbidden to impose any tax upon the colonists except such as it might be necessary to levy for colonial purposes. The Imperial Government, however, still thought, as did Charles Townshend, that it was their inalienable right to regulate the commercial policy of the Empire.

The Parliament sitting at Westminster desired to create a strong national state, self-sustained and self-dependent. That object, it was thought, could be best achieved if the colonies were to supply the mother country with food-stuffs and raw materials, receiving in return the products of English industry. The duties which were to be levied on foreign and British goods entering colonial ports were fixed by the English Parliament, but the authorities, advised by experience, handed the revenue thus obtained over to the colonial legislatures after the cost of their collection had been deducted. For commercial purposes, Canada and Australia were regarded as extensions of the United Kingdom, and as subject as Yorkshire or Berkshire to the fiscal decrees of the Imperial Parliament, subject to such modifications as were made necessary by distance and the several needs of revenue for local purposes.

The  
Navigation  
Laws.  
Their  
justifica-  
tion.

The carrying trade was the monopoly of England, that she might thereby increase her commercial dominion and naval strength. Moreover, she would thus have at her command a large number of experienced seamen with whom she might man her ships of the line should occasion

arise. With this end in view the Navigation Laws were framed (1651–60), and remained in force, with some modifications, until 1849. In Adam Smith’s opinion they increased the cost of foreign goods and decreased the price of those sold by England, but, he went on, in memorable words, ‘as defence is of much more importance than opulence, the Act of Navigation is perhaps the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England.’ It was certainly most advantageous to her commerce and to her naval defence. She became the great carrier of the world and the Mistress of the Seas. There can be little doubt, however, that the monopoly these laws secured to British shipping increased the freights which the colonists had to pay, enhanced the price of imported commodities, and, when the service was irregular, delayed the dispatch of their produce and so reduced their profits. The Imperial Government, however, justified their acts on the ground that in no other way could England secure any interest on the enormous outlay incurred in obtaining her colonies and the constant and increasing expenditure necessary to provide adequately for Imperial security.

Furthermore, in return for such sacrifices as they were required to make, the produce of the

colonists received a substantial preference over foreign commodities in the English market. In 1841 British North

American timber paid an import duty of 10s. at English ports, while that from the Baltic paid 55s.; when the price of corn in England was 52s. a bushel, Canadian corn was subject to a duty of 5s., while foreign corn was required to

Preferential  
trade.



pay 34s. 8d.; when colonial sugar was only subject to a duty of 24s., foreign sugar paid 63s. Many other articles, such as tobacco, furs, cocoa, coffee, hides, wines, butter, tallow, and cheese, were similarly preferred. These preferences were often determined according to the strength and influence of the various colonial industries in the British Parliament rather than as the outcome of an impartial inquiry at the dictation of an accepted policy. Nevertheless, the system of preferential trade was firmly established. The component parts of the Empire reciprocated each other's commercial sacrifices, thus establishing their union on an economic basis. But this policy was not the outcome of any common consciousness of the consolidating force of economic interdependence. It was inaugurated, and the details of its application were fixed, by the Parliament of the mother country in accordance with her interests. The colonies were only asked to acquiesce in arrangements whose determination was considered beyond the range of their power. And they did acquiesce without demur. The regulation of their commercial policy by the United Kingdom was the least objectionable feature of the old colonial national system. This system came crashing down under the force of other changes, giving the colonies that local autonomy which of itself would have in time demanded an alteration in the existing commercial relations.

In other spheres the ignorance of the Colonial Office was more apparent, its irresponsibility more fully realized, and its heartless attitude more keenly felt. The general discontent with its rule was so accentuated by local disorders in the

various colonies, that, by 1836, the mother country was submerged in a sea of colonial trouble which seriously threatened the stability of her Empire. Salvation was found by the application of a great liberal principle whose development has been coincident with Imperial evolution ever since, and which necessitated an immediate and radical change in Britain’s Colonial policy. Let us now turn to a consideration of those local troubles for which, together with those just reviewed, this principle was so efficacious a panacea.

The results  
of the rule  
of ‘ Mr.  
Mother  
Country.’

## CHAPTER III

### RACIAL AND POLITICAL TROUBLES IN CANADA

THE local troubles in Canada were chiefly due to a racial hatred and political grievance. The intensity of the racial feud in the Lower Province is eloquently described by Lord Durham. 'I expected to find a contest between a Government and a people,' he wrote; 'I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state: I found a struggle, not of principles; but of races; and I perceived that it would be idle to attempt any amelioration of laws or institutions until we could first succeed in terminating the deadly animosity that now separates the inhabitants of Lower Canada into the hostile divisions of French and English. . . . The national feud forces itself on the very senses, irresistibly and palpably, as the origin or the essence of every dispute which divides the community; we discover that dissensions, which appear to have another origin, are but forms of this constant and all-pervading quarrel; and that every contest is one of French and English in the outset, or becomes so ere it has run its course.'<sup>1</sup>

This profound racial hatred was due to that

<sup>1</sup> Durham's *Report*, vol. ii, pp. 16, 17.

natural want of sympathy between two sections of a community whose origin, language, laws, religion, and political training differ. This incompatibility of temperament was aggravated, in this instance, by the unsatisfactory operation of a political instrument. In accordance with the Canada Act of 1791 the colony was divided into two Provinces, each of which was given Representative Government. In the popular Chamber of Lower Canada, the French, on account of their numbers, had a decided majority. The English minority complained that the French legislated in the interest of their own countrymen. 'They looked on the Province as the patrimony of their own race; . . . and their primary care was . . . to guard the interests and feelings of the present race of inhabitants, to whom they considered the new comers as subordinate.'<sup>1</sup>

Measures, urgently needed for the welfare of the country and advocated by the English members, were shelved or ignored. Since a large part of the revenue was derived from the Customs Duties, and the English were almost the only commercial men, they very rightly claimed that some of the money thus obtained should be expended in the schemes of public utility which they favoured. Each member looked after the interests of his one electorate. Few of them seemed even to dream of legislating for the well-being of Lower Canada. The English population were furiously angry. They rebelled against being politically subject to those whose political inability was patent. In the press and on the platform they attacked the French

<sup>1</sup> Durham's *Report*, vol. ii, p. 49.

fiercely. They regarded the policy of the Assembly as a deliberate attempt to prevent any further emigration to the Province, to stop the increase of their wealth, and to render precarious the money they had invested and the property they had acquired in Lower Canada.

The French, however, had an assured majority and could afford to ignore their opponents. They would probably have listened impassively to their attacks, but their own equanimity was very much disturbed when they found that the Legislative Council made very short work of some of the measures which they sent up for its approbation. This second Chamber was a very necessary and effective drag on the political coach. 'I have no hesitation in saying,' wrote Durham,<sup>1</sup> 'that many of the Bills which it is most severely blamed for rejecting were Bills which it could not have passed without a dereliction of its duty to the Constitution, the connexion with Great Britain, and the whole English population of the Colony.' The Executive and Legislative Councils were as strongly opposed to the French majority in the Assembly as were the English members of that body. 'Thus a bold and intelligent democracy was impelled, by its impatience for liberal measures, joined to its national antipathies, to make common cause with a Government which was at issue with the majority on the question of popular rights.'<sup>2</sup>

When this majority found that the Council did not hesitate to veto their extravagant proposals they immediately attacked it without restraint.

<sup>1</sup> Durham's *Report*, vol. ii, p. 82.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Deprived by their Constitution of the sobering influence of ministerial responsibility, their opposition was factious, their propositions ridiculous, and their arguments calculated to stir up racial prejudices. They suggested no remedy for the trouble until 1828, when Papineau proposed that the Legislative Council should be elected as was the popular House. His solution, which in all probability would not have solved the problem, was unheeded. The animosity between the two races increased, the quarrels between the Assembly and the Executive became more frequent and embittered, and, for five years in succession, the Assembly refused to grant supplies. Finally, in 1837, Papineau's illiterate and misguided admirers took up arms. Their leader proved himself a contemptible failure. 'A braggart in the forum and a coward in the field, he provoked a storm he knew neither how to allay or direct.'<sup>1</sup> He soon fled to the United States. The 'rebellion' was a very petty affair: with trifling loss it was stamped out. Lord John Russell suspended the Constitution of Lower Canada for three years, and Lord Durham was appointed as Governor-General with extraordinary powers.

'Removed from all actual share in the government of their country the French' brooded 'in sullen silence over the memory of their fallen countrymen, of their burnt villages, of their ruined property, of their extinguished ascendancy, and of their humbled nationality.' The English inhabitants found 'themselves still in the minority in the

Papineau's  
'Rebel-  
lion.'

The  
temper  
of the  
Province  
in 1836.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Reid's *Lord Durham*, vol. ii, p. 166.

midst of a hostile and organized people ; apprehensions of secret conspiracies and sanguinary designs' haunted 'them unceasingly, and their only hope of safety' was 'supposed to rest on systematically terrifying and disabling the French, and in preventing a majority of that race from ever again being predominant in any portion of the legislature of the Province.'<sup>1</sup>

The disorders in Upper Canada and the Maritime Provinces were no less sharp, if not so embittered. In the former they resolved themselves into a bitter conflict between the popular House and the Family Compact, whose members held almost every position of trust and emolument in the colony. The existence of this Family Compact is a fact of the first importance in the social and political history of Upper Canada. Its members were drawn from the more educated and refined of those United Empire Loyalists, who, after suffering the most cruel persecution at the hands of their fellow-colonists, had been placed by Lord Dorchester on the fringe of a virgin wilderness extending from Montreal along the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario. There they had been obliged to toil unceasingly for a miserable sustenance. They had only begun to settle comfortably in their new home when their detested southern neighbours again attacked them. With splendid courage they and the British troops and the French from Lower Canada successfully repulsed their onslaught.

After such heroic sacrifices they considered that they had special claims upon England ; that the

<sup>1</sup> Durham's *Report*, p. 52.

land, which they were now converting into a prosperous colony, was their peculiar heritage, whose destinies they alone should control. They had borne the heat and burden of the day, their names were inscribed upon the scroll of honour, they were, in truth, the salt of Upper Canada. Others might come within their confines. Hordes of the detested Americans did come. Their advent enriched and opened up the country. The United Empire Loyalists were prepared to sell them land, and profit accordingly, but they were adamant in refusing to allow them to have any voice in the government of the Province. Democracy to them was the parent of all evils. They had suffered too greatly at its hands to forget easily. They were ultra-loyal—but violently anti-democratic and anti-republican. Their prejudices were fostered and their social and political predominance strengthened by the aristocratic sympathies of Simcoe. But it was not until the advent of Mr. Francis Gore that they secured that supreme control of the Province which they retained until 1837. ‘He was a weak man, and it may be said, speaking broadly, that his advent marked the period when Upper Canada began to fall into the hands of that oligarchy which developed later into the celebrated Family Compact—the leading note of Upper Canadian history.’<sup>1</sup>

The United Empire Loyalists rendered great services to the British Empire. For their principles they sacrificed more in worldly goods than they could ever hope to recover in Upper Canada; they were best fitted to control the destinies of the Province

Opposition  
of ‘Re-  
formers.’

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *Making of Canada*, p. 264.



they had shed their blood to save; 'if they monopolized the offices they also monopolized most of the graces to be found in a new country.'<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately they became so intoxicated with power that they abused their trust, and placed personal before public interests. They were able to defy the Assembly for many years because Upper Canada remained wholly an agricultural country. The labour involved in converting a forest to a plantation was too strenuous, absorbing, and solitary, to allow of time for political considerations. It was fully fifty years before the opposition to the Family Compact came out of the woods. Then, marshalling their forces, they made sustained attacks upon the oligarchy. They accused its members of jobbery and extravagance. Whenever the atmosphere was not sufficiently angry, they brought forward that much-worried bone of contention, the Clergy Reserves.

By the Constitutional Act of 1791 it was directed that one-seventh of all land granted by the Government should be reserved for the support of the Protestant clergy. The existence of these Clergy Reserves provoked endless disputes. According to the very ambiguous phrase in the Act these lands were to be reserved for the support of the 'Protestant clergy.' The priests of the Church of England, under the leadership of Archdeacon Strachan, a very able and resolute man, interpreted 'Protestant' to mean Anglican, and accordingly claimed all the profits which accrued from them. The 'Family Compact,' most of whose members

The  
Clergy  
Reserves.

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, *Making of Canada*, p. 382.

belonged to the Church of England, concurred in his decision and supported him. In deference to the opinion of the English Law Officers the words were given a wider application and the Presbyterians were held to be included in the term. The other Protestant ecclesiastical organizations, however, such as the Methodists and Baptists, very naturally understood the phrase in a wider and more general sense. They protested that the Clergy Reserves were also set aside for their support. The validity of their claim is apparent. Moreover, they were an increasing majority and more in need of financial assistance than the two wealthier denominations. The Roman Catholics, too, had a legitimate grievance. They constituted at least one-fifth of the whole population of Upper Canada, and their loyalty was above suspicion. Consequently, they failed to see why they were excluded from any participation in the benefits freely distributed by the Imperial Government amongst the other provincial subjects of the Crown. The Reformers in the Province had on two occasions passed resolutions proposing that the Clergy Reserves should be resumed and that the funds accruing from them should be devoted to the support of a system of public education. But these Bills were rejected by the Legislative Council. Thus to the increasing annoyance of a powerful party in the Assembly, the popular will was thwarted by a nominee Chamber and an irresponsible Executive.

Furthermore the finances were in an unsatisfactory condition. The Government had embarked upon a bold far-sighted public works policy. But their revenue had ceased to equal

their expenditure, and the provincial debt became, in consequence, one of increasing magnitude. Since much of the money had been spent in improving the navigability of the St. Lawrence, they had

Unsatisfactory  
condition  
of the  
Finances.

hoped that the Government of Lower Canada would impose certain duties at Quebec by which they would be reimbursed for their outlay. This, however, that Government refused to do since their revenues were sufficiently buoyant. In Upper Canada, as elsewhere, unsound finance supplied the Opposition with a heavy cudgel with which to belabour the Executive, and they did not hesitate to apply it vigorously. The Government was denounced as uneconomical and even wilfully extravagant. The conflict between the official party and the Reformers became more and more violent. The Executive were reluctant to acknowledge any responsibility to the people of the colony and refused to permit their extensive powers to be curtailed. The majority of the people's representatives were unwilling to entrust the entire control of the colony's affairs to an exclusive official caste, who were certainly guilty of a pronounced sectarian bias and whose expenditure of the public money was not above suspicion. The 'Reformers' were by no means mere factious malcontents whose suspicions of the Family Compact were unfounded. The administration had become corrupt, inefficient, and mischievous. 'When I look to the state of the Government and to the departmental administration of the Province,' wrote Lord Sydenham,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Egerton and Grant, *Constitutional Development of Canada*, p. 278.

‘instead of being surprised at the condition in which I find it I am only astonished it has been endured so long.’

The Reformers became more and more sullen and discontented. At last, in 1837, a few of Mackenzie's them, under the leadership of William Rebellion. Lyons Mackenzie, broke out in rebellion. In the event of success they hoped to compel the Governor and Council to grant the required concessions. This ‘foolishly contrived, ill-conducted, wicked and treasonable’ insurrection was soon suppressed. Mackenzie escaped to the United States, but his two chief lieutenants were hanged, in spite of petitions in their favour signed by no less than 30,000 of their countrymen.<sup>1</sup> The Tories in the Province took advantage of this rising to persecute all Reformers, whose anger and discontent were still more inflamed. With ill-concealed anxiety they awaited the Imperial Government's solution of their complicated problems.

The tension between the Legislature and the Executive in the Maritime Provinces was neither so prolonged nor so acute as in Upper and Lower Canada, but here, too, the issue between the Legislature and the Executive had become perfectly clear. Political discontent in the Maritime Provinces. Owing to the withdrawal of the British cruisers from American waters at the conclusion of peace in 1815, the prosperity of Nova Scotia was seriously affected. Becoming dissatisfied and

<sup>1</sup> Durham's *Report*, vol. ii, p. 165. Committee of Legislative Council of Upper Canada state the number to be 4,574. *Vide* Egerton and Grant, *Constitutional Development of Canada*, p. 187.

restless, her people began to scan their constitutional system narrowly. They realized that the initiation and control of public measures were monopolized by a powerful and exclusive oligarchy of twelve persons, of whom both the Executive and Legislative Councils were composed. This oligarchy not only ignored the Assembly when the opinions of the majority in that chamber clashed with their own, but, like the members of the 'Family Compact,' they were guilty of religious bigotry. About 1830 the Provincial Legislature, led by Joseph Howe, the ablest and most eloquent statesman North America had yet produced, definitely demanded Responsible Government.

'In all these Provinces,' as Lord Durham pointed out,<sup>1</sup> 'we find Representative Government coupled with an irresponsible Executive; we find the same constant collision between the branches of the Government; the same abuse of the powers of the representative bodies, owing to the anomaly of their position, aided by the want of good municipal institutions, and the same constant interference of the Imperial Administration in matters which should' have been 'left wholly to the Provincial Governments.'

<sup>1</sup> Durham's *Report*, vol. ii, p. 194.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL GRIEVANCES IN AUSTRALIA

WHILE Canada was distressed by racial dissensions and agitations for Responsible Government, a powerful section in Australia was vehemently denouncing the whole system of transportation, and insisting upon its immediate abolition. They emphasized its ugly features and the evil consequences its continuance would entail. On the other hand there were others who maintained that, since the Continent was occupied by England exclusively for penal purposes, she was entitled to send her convicts thither, especially since the land had been opened up and developed by their labour.

Doubtless, had the need for some distant depôt for the reception of the overflow from the English gaols not been urgent, New South Wales would not have been formally settled by the Imperial Government in 1788. The humiliation and disillusionment so recently experienced were calculated to discourage, for some considerable time, any colonization for the sake of extending the limits of the British Empire. And yet, had she delayed entering into possession for a few months, she might have been forestalled by some other Power and have lost Australasia for ever. Australians

Anti-transportation movement in Australia.

Advantages of transportation for Australia.

(a) Led to the occupation of Australia by England.

might regret that their nation was born under such unpromising circumstances, but it shows to-day no visible signs of the scars of its infancy and may yet become the most potent power in the Southern Hemisphere.

Moreover Australia benefited materially by the presence of the convicts. At least £10,000,000 of

(b) Pro-  
vided a  
supply of  
cheap  
labour.

England's money were spent in the equipment, dispatch, and maintenance of thousands of convicts who were employed in the construction of public

works which were both useful and valuable to the colonists. By their labour the woods had been cleared and the soil cultivated. 'As slave colonies have more generally and more rapidly increased in wealth, on account of the forced combination of labour than the colonies planted entirely by free men who have not combined their labour,' the Committee of 1838 reported,<sup>1</sup> 'so in these colonies of criminals in bondage where the few free settlers were provided not only with slaves free of expense, but likewise with an excellent market, a larger amount of wealth has been accumulated in a shorter space of time than perhaps in any other community of the same size in the world.' On these economic grounds there was a large number of people in the colonies, particularly amongst the landholders, who favoured the continuance of transportation. They feared that otherwise the supply of labour would be insufficient and their prosperity would be adversely affected. Even when the system was finally abolished they hankered after these advantages of it.

<sup>1</sup> Report included in Sir W. Molesworth's *Speeches*, p. 491.

Furthermore there were Secretaries of State, Colonial Governors, philanthropists, and prison reformers, who applauded a system by which wrong-doers were removed from the scene of their guilt to a new country, where, after having done penance for their crimes, they might enter upon a new life with good prospects of constant employment, high wages, and ample scope if they possessed the necessary ability, enterprise, and industry to avail themselves of their opportunities. Their interests as prisoners and emancipists were deemed by such Governors as Macquarie and Arthur to be their first and chief consideration. 'Van Diemens Land was looked upon by Sir George Arthur as intended to be a vast gaol or penitentiary; and he contended that the free settlers had become its willing inmates, and must abide cheerfully by the rules and customs of the prison.'<sup>1</sup>

It was 'a pretension altogether unreasonable,' said Lord Grey,<sup>2</sup> for free immigrants to demand the abolition of the system. 'With what justice,' he asked, 'can those who have for their own convenience settled in that part of the world, which the Government and Parliament of this country had previously selected for the reception of convicts, now claim that, when they have obtained from the system all the advantages they desire, it should, to meet their wishes, be discontinued, though this would be attended

<sup>1</sup> Report of Committee of 1838 included in Sir W. Molesworth's *Speeches*, p. 458.

<sup>2</sup> *Colonial Policy of Lord J. Russell's Administration*, vol. ii, p. 86.



with great and manifest injury to the interests of the Empire ? ’

From these views, however, those who had the fullest opportunity of observing the effects of convictism upon its victims, and those Arguments against the system. free settlers who intended to make the Australian colonies their home, vigorously dissented.

As a general rule a convict, at the end of his term, was more depraved, more brutal, than at its commencement. (a) Depraved the convicts. ‘The well-proven effect of transportation,’ in the opinion of the Committee of 1838,<sup>1</sup> was ‘to demoralize, not reform, the offender.’ The punishments inflicted were excessively severe. Sentences of such a character were inflicted for petty crimes that the sufferers preferred death under its most appalling aspects rather than endure them. ‘Let a man be what he will when he comes here,’ said Judge Burton, ‘he is soon as bad as the rest; a man’s heart is taken from him, and there is given to him the heart of a beast.’

Those who were assigned to settlers were frequently more unfortunate than their fellows in the penal settlements. Some found kind (b) Doubtful fate of assigned servants. masters. Those who were skilled artisans were often indulged that their valuable services might be retained.

But they were the sport of Fate. Like the slaves of the South in America, their lot depended upon the character of their master. Those who fell into the hands of a St. Clare were as happy as they could be under such circumstances; those who fell into the clutches of a Legree were of all

<sup>1</sup> Report in Sir W. Molesworth’s *Speeches*, p. 481.

men most miserable. Sir Richard Bourke, a wise, just, and humane man, stated<sup>1</sup> that it was 'one of the most apparent and necessary results of the system of assignment to render the condition of convicts so placed extremely unequal, depending, as it must, on a variety of circumstances over which the Government' could 'not possibly exercise any control.'

The moral tone of the community was distinctly low. Three-fourths of the offenders in

(c) Lowered the moral tone of the community. innumerable crimes were ex-convicts. Murders, and attempts at murder, were as common in the colonies as petty larcenies in England. The number of

convictions for serious offences was out of all proportion to the population of the settlements.

'It would appear to one who could look down upon the community,' said Judge Burton, 'as if the main business of them all were the commission of crime and the punishment of it.' 'More immorality prevailed in Sydney than in any other town of the same size in the British Dominions.'<sup>2</sup>

Transportation neither reformed the criminal nor deterred others in England from committing

(d) Failed to reform the criminals or to deter others. crime. Those who experienced the greatest misery that the penal system could inflict, seldom wrote to friends or relatives in the mother country, while those who prospered did not fail

to inform others at home of their good fortune.

Those who contemplated doing wrong were apt

<sup>1</sup> Report in Sir W. Molesworth's *Speeches*, p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Committee in Sir W. Molesworth's *Speeches*, pp. 478, 483.

to regard it as a gamble flavoured with the spice of adventure. If they committed a crime they had first to be detected, then captured, then sentenced, and then transported. Anything might happen between that commission and their arrival at a fearful penitentiary. Nothing could be said in favour of the system of punishment which not only failed to deter others from crime or reform the offenders, but exacted such retributive penance that the guilty were dehumanized and brutalized in the process.

The free settlers had other cogent reasons for cursing the whole system. The action of the mother country implied that the rich and fruitful colony which was their home was considered a mere human cesspool into which she might empty her refuse. It was credited by the world with a reputation which made it a byword amongst fellow Englishmen and discouraged the immigration of free men.

(e) Discouraged Immigration. Its social organism was being impregnated with a virus which would react for generations upon the character of their people. Free workmen found it impossible to compete on equal terms with the convicts

(f) Poisoned the social organism. whose presence in the labour market reduced wages and restricted the field of employment. As Englishmen, they wished to have a determining voice in the management of their own concerns, and that

(g) Prevented self-government. right could not be allowed them while the colonies remained penal settlements. And, finally, the continuance of the system was contrary to the will of the majority of the free men of the community on

(h) It was objectionable to the majority of the free settlers.

a matter vitally affecting its welfare. It was true that a fraction of the inhabitants favoured the system, but it was obviously unjust to sacrifice the great social and political interests of the colony at large for their pecuniary benefit. Transportation was denounced as 'incompatible with the permanence of British rule in Australasia.' The colonists declared that if the alternative were forced upon them of 'choosing between a British connexion in name, and an unsullied British character in fact,' the latter would be preferred 'at any sacrifice.' On moral, social, economic, and political grounds they appealed to the Imperial Government to abolish the whole system.

The movement in favour of greater political powers, which saw in convictism one of its most serious obstacles, was growing in importance and influence under the Movement in favour of political reform. compelling eloquence of the master statesmen of the day. William Charles Wentworth vigorously criticized the existing Nominee Councils and resurrected the ancient cry of 'No taxation without representation.' The mother country was invited to bestow upon her children in remote New South Wales the privileges they would have enjoyed had they remained in England. The immediate barrier was Transportation, and that the colonists were determined to remove, that there might be no reason for withholding from them their inalienable rights.

Land and labour problems. And, finally, the Australian colonists were confronted with land and labour problems of a difficult and urgent kind. Revenue was necessary for works of development,

## 58 SOCIAL GRIEVANCES IN AUSTRALIA

and labour was essential that that work might be done. Thousands of acres of land were available, yet there was no satisfactory method of settling it or controlling those who settled on it remote from the few centres of civilization. Immigration was urgently needed, but there was no money to stimulate and no organization to govern its flow. Control of the Crown lands was vested in the representatives of the Colonial Office, desirable immigrants were living in poverty in the great English towns, and their destitution was in a measure responsible for the crime which fed the detested system of transportation and retarded the growth of the colonies towards political manhood. These three subjects, which so vitally affected the welfare and the prospects of the Australian settlements, were closely related and under the authority of 'Mr. Mother Country.' To his office and to the English Government the colonists were looking with the keenest expectation for a solution of their difficulties.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RACIAL FEUD IN SOUTH AFRICA

WHILE discontented Canadians quarrelled bitterly and appealed to the arbitrament of arms and Australians argued and agitated, the Dutch in Cape Colony remedied their grievances in a more novel manner. They simply trekked beyond the confines of the British colony. In no quarter of the Empire has Great Britain's Colonial policy been so uncertain and tortuous as in South Africa. 'For forty years,' said Mr. Gladstone in 1881, 'I have always regarded the South African question as the one great unsolved and insoluble problem of our colonial system.' The inherent difficulties implicitly referred to in this statement were largely the result of the character of those 27,000 Boers, the descendants of the Dutch and Huguenot settlers, who were found around Cape Town and in the west of the Colony when England finally entered into possession in 1814. That character we have now to analyse.

The company of sturdy Hollanders which settled at the Cape under the auspices of the Netherlands East India Company seldom communicated with their mother country, from which they were so far removed. Drawn as they were from the humbler classes, they had few interests in Holland, and,

The effects  
of the  
rule of  
'Mr.  
Mother  
Country',  
in South  
Africa.

The  
character  
of the  
Boers.

losing touch with Europe, regarded the land of their adoption as their true home. At this early period in the history of Cape Colony the Afrikaner sentiment began to develop. Some national traits, however, were ineradicable.

As Dutchmen, they were imbued with an intense love of liberty, and deep, if narrow, religious convictions. When they became strangers to all other books, they remained diligent readers of their Bible. But they were animated by the spirit of the Old rather than the New Testament.

Their love  
of liberty  
and their  
religious  
earnest-  
ness.

Their religion was and remained that of the austere Puritans of the seventeenth century. Throughout all their wanderings and tribulations they continued steadfast in their belief that they were under the special protection of the Almighty.

To these qualities were added others as the result of their environment. As they scattered

Their love  
for soli-  
tude and  
hatred of  
authority.

over the surface of the country in attendance upon their flocks and herds, they became more and more isolated from their fellows. Alone with the drear forces of Nature in South Africa, they came to love a solitary, independent life. Armed with musket and knife they delighted to ride afar into the desert. Taught to rely upon themselves, they met the attacks of wild beasts and savage blacks with fearless courage, and dispatched them with merciless decision. Except when they united in commandoes for the discomfiture of their enemies, each was a law unto himself. 'They had a genius for disobedience.'<sup>1</sup>

Such a wild rude life soon told upon their

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*, p. 156.

habits. Their children grew up in surroundings which wanted grace and refinement. Their rudeness, ignorance, and conservatism. Their women-folk lost that reputation for cleanliness and neatness to which their kinsfolk in Holland are justly entitled. The men became rough, rude, ignorant, and old-fashioned.

Moreover their life in the saddle made industrial, mining, and even agricultural occupations distasteful to them. If there was wealth to be won from the soil of the rocks it was for others. They preferred to count their substance in spans of oxen. In politics they had no interest. They had no desire to be governed. They only wished to be left uncontrolled. Simple in their lives, earnest in their Faith, hospitable to each other, possessed of the qualities essential for success in their line of life, always wary, shrewd, dogged, courageous, full of confidence in themselves and of contempt and dislike for the blacks, they remained unconscious of the revolutionary ideas which had moved the world since the seventeenth century, to which, in spirit, they belonged.

It was unthinkable that they should hail with delight their transference to the British Government. Nevertheless, they were becoming dissatisfied with the government of the East India Company, and might have come to own allegiance to the British Crown without the slightest bitterness. In fact, at the outset, the ultimate fusion of the two races might reasonably have been expected. They were somewhat similar in character. They were at one in their religion and

Dislike  
of settled  
occupa-  
tions.

Conditions  
favourable  
to the  
amalgama-  
tion of  
the two  
races.



in their love of liberty. Their languages were akin, and might easily be mastered by either race. The administration of the first two English Governors was just and wise. Schools were established, the breed of cattle was improved, the administration of justice reorganized, the importation of slaves abolished. Missionaries were sent to the heathen; the Roman-Dutch law, which had been in force under the Company, was and is permitted; and local institutions remained practically unaltered. Social relations became quite friendly, and the final amalgamation of the two peoples seemed assured when these fair promises were blasted by a series of untoward incidents.

The Boers of the country districts had little social intercourse with the British, and remained deeply attached to their old habits.

(a) Prospects  
of fusion  
blasted  
by (a)  
Slagters  
Nek.

They had never been accustomed to regard the natives with much consideration, and when, in 1815, the British authorities arrested a farmer for maltreating his black servant, an insignificant rising broke out at Slagters Nek. It was suppressed, but five of the prisoners were put to death. Such harshness, when gentle handling was one of the first conditions of fusion, was most unfortunate, and the mention of that place always aroused a feeling of bitterness in the Boers towards the English.

(b) Sub-  
stitution  
of English  
for Dutch  
as the  
official  
language.

Then, between 1825 and 1828, English was substituted for Dutch as the official language of the Colony. This was a great hardship for the Dutch population, of whom but few understood English. Furthermore, the system of local

Government was so altered as to reduce the share in it which they had hitherto enjoyed.

Moreover, they were unable to understand the attitude of the British Government towards the

(c) Glen-  
elg's  
attitude  
towards  
the  
Kaffirs.  
Kaffirs. 'Kaffir wars recurred in the history of the Cape Colony, like so many epidemics.'<sup>1</sup> In 1811 the Kosas were pushed back beyond the Fish River, which became the eastern frontier of

the Colony, and a treaty was made with the reputed chieftain of the border tribes to prevent any further inroads. Such treaties, however, were futile. The Kaffirs were constantly at war. Impi after impi fell upon those in front of them, either driving them from the land or exterminating them. Those who had been expelled were forced, by the momentum of their flight, into British territory, where they committed intolerable depredations. They, and not the whites, were the aggressors. They were not rooted in the soil, and could hardly lay any just claim to it on the grounds of priority of occupation. By the assegai they had won it, by the same instrument they were prepared to defend it.

The Imperial authorities, animated by laudable motives but grossly ignorant as to the true facts of the case and resolutely averse to any extension of British territory, persistently interpreted defensive wars to be offensive wars against unoffending natives, and as persistently interfered in South African affairs, to the disgust of their own representatives and to the annoyance of the Boers. In 1818 the Cape colonists, obliged again to take up

<sup>1</sup> Lucas, *Historical Geography of British colonies—Africa*, Part I, p. 149.

arms to protect themselves, compelled the Kaffirs to retreat beyond the Keiskamma River. The territory between it and the Fish River was to be regarded henceforth as neutral. Despite these arrangements, however, in December, 1834, twelve thousand Kaffirs poured across the frontier into the Colony and for nearly a fortnight laid it waste. 'This fertile and beautiful province,' wrote the Governor, 'is almost a desert, and the murders which have gone hand in hand with all this work of pillage and rapine have deeply aggravated its atrocity.' A combined force of Boers and English then swept the marauders beyond the Kei River. The frontier of Cape Colony was advanced to that stream, the territory between the Great Fish and the Kei Rivers was settled with friendly natives on the distinct understanding that they were British subjects on British territory, and fortresses were built and strongly garrisoned at strategic points. 'It was the broadest settlement of the border question which had yet taken place, statesmanlike, and with a fair promise for the future.'

But while D'Urban deplored the misfortunes of 'faithful subjects who had been visited with calamities rarely paralleled, and undeserved by an act of the sufferers,' Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, penned dispatches defending the oppressed natives. 'In the conduct which was pursued towards the Kaffir nation by the colonists and the public authorities of the Colony through a long series of years,' he wrote, 'the Kaffirs had an ample justification of the war into which they were rushed with such fatal imprudence. Urged to revenge and desperation by the systematic

injustice of which they had been the victims, I am compelled to embrace, however reluctantly, the conclusion that they had a perfect right to hazard the experiment, however hopeless, of extorting by force that redress which they could not otherwise hope to obtain.' The Governor said the final word in the closing sentences of his last dispatch on the subject. 'Your Lordship in England and I upon the spot,' he wrote, 'have seen all these African matters under different views, and it would be now useless to pursue the subject further.' He warned him that if his settlement were not confirmed, 'this will be speedily followed by an extensive abandonment of Albany and Somerset on the part of the farmers.' However, Lord Glenelg, convinced that 'the great evil of Cape Colony' consisted 'in its magnitude,' removed its frontier back to the Keiskamma River and recalled its able Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban.

'Few decisions have had more far-reaching results than that which was embodied in Lord Glenelg's dispatch.' It furnished a precedent for the shifting, uncertain, progressive, and retrogressive policy of Great Britain in South Africa. England was lowered in the estimation of both the Boers and the Kaffirs. The latter could admire strong and unswerving determination; the former felt that the Colonial Office was obstinate, ignorant, and unjust to them. They and the English had a common grievance—both were antagonistic to 'Mr. Mother Country.'

But the chief source of the ill-feeling which came to subsist between the English Government and the Boers was their conflicting methods of

treating the coloured population. In 1829 an Imperial Ordinance proclaimed that 'all Hottentots and other free persons of colour lawfully residing within the limits of Cape Colony are in the most full and ample manner entitled to all and every right, benefit, and privilege to which any other British subjects are entitled.'

(d) The granting of a Magna Charta 'to free persons of colour' by the English Government.

This 'Magna Charta of the Kaffirs' the Boers regarded as a direct insult to themselves. They had lived amongst the natives for centuries; they knew nothing of the doctrines of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity which had revolutionized the thoughts and ideals of the nineteenth century; they knew by experience that they could only preserve their racial purity and their dominant position by keeping themselves apart from the natives; they considered themselves superior in many important respects to the Hottentots and the other semi-civilized or uncivilized blacks; and they regarded a decree, which gave the despised aboriginals 'every right of a British subject in the most full and ample manner,' as the ordinance of a mad Government, which, ignorant of actual conditions and animated by fanciful and beautiful theories, humiliated them by trying to bridge the impassable gulf set between them and the abominable Kaffir.

Furthermore, they were exasperated beyond endurance by the missionaries, who faithfully denounced every instance of harsh treatment of the blacks. 'We complain,' wrote one of their leaders, 'of the unjustifiable odium which has been cast upon us by interested and dishonest persons, under the

(e) The zeal of the missionaries.

name of religion, whose testimony is believed in England to the exclusion of all evidence in our favour.' There seems to be little doubt that the cruelty of the Boers has been exaggerated; it is possible that the Kaffir does not yield readily to moral suasion; it is true that the zeal of the missionaries occasionally made them officious and meddlesome. Still, on the whole, their influence was beneficial. The Dutch farmers could not tolerate the restraints imposed upon them in the cause of humanity, but they had to pay the penalty of cutting themselves off so entirely from the rest of the world.

Finally, in 1834, the British Parliament passed a Statute by which their slaves were emancipated.

(f) The abolition of slavery. To add to their injuries, the compensation they received was inadequate. That filled their cup of suffering to overflowing. Their eyes turned to the great tablelands away to the north and the east where they might indulge their passion for solitude, and, far removed from the Government they hated, treat the natives as they pleased and live according to their own standards. For thousands it meant a great sacrifice, and the future was charged with dangers. But their liberty was to be their reward. In 1836, with a valour and dignity that compel admiration, they spanned their oxen, loaded their wagons with their domestic outfit, and, driving their herds before them, trekked away beyond the boundaries of Cape Colony determined to form independent Republics.

The great Trek, 1836. This secession of the Boers in 1836 is an important landmark in the history of British South Africa. It finally destroyed the hope, once reason-

ably entertained, of a fusion between the white  
 Its in- population, and created that racial  
 terest hatred which was to cause such strife in  
 and im- the land. It is a story which reflects  
 portance. little credit on the Colonial Office. In it we find  
 none of that tact, patience, and thoughtful con-  
 sideration for the weaknesses of others that was  
 essential to success in Cape Colony. No generous  
 compromise was offered, no attempt at concilia-  
 tion was made. Instead of being guided by the  
 advice of able and patriotic Governors conversant  
 with local conditions, incompetent ministers pre-  
 ferred to act in accordance with preconceived  
 ideas and amiable theories. An attempt was  
 made to fill old bottles with new wine. The pre-  
 diction which accompanied the parable was  
 fulfilled.

# The Policy of the Devolution of Authority

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE IDEAS OF 'THE THEORISTS OF 1830'

THE centralization policy of the Colonial Office had failed disastrously. Throughout the Empire dissension and discontent were rife. Canada, Australia, South Africa, and even the West Indian Islands, protested vehemently against interference in their concerns by remote authorities, who, while ignorant of their temper, their habits of thought and of action, and their local requirements, combined such complete powers with entire irresponsibility to those directly affected by their measures. Within their own confines they beheld their Legislatures and Executives irreconcilably opposed, the development of their natural resources arrested owing to a dearth of labour, envenomed racial feuds between the English and French and between the English and the Dutch, their social and industrial fabrics rudely disturbed by the operation of far-reaching reforms sanctioned by the Imperial Legislature, and, in Australia, the deterioration of the composition of the community by the undesired injection of

Disastrous failure of the policy of centralized control.



unhealthy elements. The times were thoroughly out of joint. Political, social, and economic reforms were imperative if the integrity of the Empire were to be preserved.

At this critical juncture a great revival of interest in the whole business of colonization ensued.

The new  
school of  
Imperial  
enthusi-  
asts.  
The  
Theorists  
of 1830.'

A school of young, informed, able, and enthusiastic statesmen began to devote their intellect and their time to the study of colonial questions. They quickly diagnosed the causes of the colonial troubles then so numerous. The old system, haphazard and mischievous, was utterly wrong. They wished to replace it by the judicious practice of carefully thought out theories. The remedial measures which they proposed were at once philosophic and statesmanlike. They only asked for a fair field and the suspension of judgements until their theories were given a sufficient trial.

The most distinguished of these 'theorists of 1830' were Lord Durham, Edward Gibbon Wake-

The most  
con-  
spicuous  
members  
of the  
school:  
their  
passion  
for  
Liberty.

field, Charles Buller, and Sir William Molesworth. It would be impossible to overestimate the value of their services to the British Empire, or to over-appreciate their benign influence on the colonial policy of Great Britain. They were animated by a mastering passion for liberty. 'I will freely own to you,' said Lord Durham at the Grey banquet on the 15th September, 1834, 'that I am one of those who see with regret every hour which passes over the existence of acknowledged abuses.'<sup>1</sup> They maintained,

<sup>1</sup> Reid, *Life of Lord Durham*, vol. i, p. 377.

with ardent enthusiasm, that ample opportunity should be given for the development of political and personal individuality, that the diversity of human nature and of human personality should be afforded the fullest scope. Their public careers were inspired by this fundamental and life-giving principle, and it is because they succeeded in making it the basic principle of England's colonial policy that the British Empire is to-day a fact of such cardinal importance in the world.

Great Britain had now reached the parting of the ways. Continuance in her former path, in accordance with the old centralization policy, would have inevitably resulted in the dissolution of her Empire, whereas, if she deflected her course into the avenue indicated by the new school who believed so whole-heartedly in local self-government, she would be justified by philosophic teaching, and, if in practice autonomy spelt dismemberment, the separation would at least be peaceful. This baseless fear that the Empire would break up was peculiar to the opponents of the liberal-minded enthusiasts. It stirred no response in their hearts, for they were persuaded that they were thus cementing the bonds of the Empire whose integrity it was their most earnest desire to preserve.

It is one of the tragedies of our colonial history that these four men, to whom we owe so much, should have been so handicapped by Fortune that they were prevented from developing to their fullness the richness of their powers. Wakefield alone attained his fiftieth birthday. But his public career was blasted by the indiscretions of his youth, the

Tragic mis-  
fortunes  
of the  
theorists.

deserved ignominy which they brought upon him, and the invincible distrust bred even in his friends by an unscrupulousness which consorted ill with his philosophic outlook and statesmanlike insight. Lord Durham inherited a weak constitution, suffered acutely from dyspepsia and rheumatism, was visited with grievous family afflictions, and was finally abandoned by the cowardly infidelity of Lord Melbourne to the vindictive malice of Lord Brougham. Always sanguine, impulsive, haughty, and impatient, he could brook no interference or restraint from those who were too cautious, selfish, or slow-witted to keep pace with him. Naturally of a very proud and sensitive temperament, he was quick to take offence and hasty in his retaliation. The consequence was that his few firm friends were those who appreciated the warmth of his heart and the generosity of his nature, and remembered the illnesses and disappointments of his life. Sir William Molesworth, disfigured when young by a scrofulous disease, tortured as a youth by the cruel comments of his fellows, piqued as a man by his failures in the lists of love, and penalized by electors on account of his radical opinions, had only attained a ministerial office where his well-known ideas as to the proper method of managing colonial affairs might have found expression when death touched him. The loveliest nature of them all was possessed by Charles Buller. His pure and generous spirit evoked the affection of his master Carlyle, who loved him for himself and admired the strength and the originality of his intellect. But he, too, was cut off before the promise of his natural parts was fulfilled.

But these four great men have left us a record of their opinions in reports, pamphlets, and speeches which is not only stimulating and inspiring, but is a valuable contribution to the permanent stock of our literature. To Lord Durham we are indebted for ‘the most valuable document in the English language on the subject of Colonial policy’; in his *Art of Colonization* Wakefield enunciates opinions, novel in his day, now political commonplaces, with point and lucidity; in their speeches both Molesworth and Buller marshalled a series of cogent arguments in terse and nervous English, which completely demolished the contentions of their political adversaries.

These potent forces directed the whole of their artillery upon the Office in Downing Street. In biting phrases they ridiculed its pretensions to govern an Empire. ‘The Secretary of State for the Colonies,’ said Molesworth,<sup>1</sup> ‘traverses and re-traverses, in his imagination, the terra-queous globe; flying from the Arctic to the Antarctic pole; hurrying from the snows of North America to the burning regions of the tropics; rushing across from the fertile islands of the West Indies to the arid deserts of South Africa and Australia; like nothing on earth, or in romance, save the Wandering Jew. For instance, one day the Colonial Secretary is in Ceylon, a financial and a religious reformer, promoting the interests of the coffee-planter and casting discredit on the tooth and religion of Buddha; the next day he is in the West Indies

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches*, pp. 238-9.

teaching the economical manufacture of sugar ; or in Van Dieman's Land, striving to reform the fiends whom he has transported to that pandemonium. Now he is in Canada, discussing the Indemnity Bill and the war of races ; anon he is at the Cape of Good Hope, dancing a war-dance with Sir Harry Smith and his Kaffir subjects ; or in New Zealand, an unsuccessful Lycurgus, coping with Honi Heki ; or at Natal, treating with Panda, King of the Zulus ; or in Labuan, digging coal and warring with pirates ; or in the midst of South Africa, defeating Pretorius and his rebel Boers ; or in Vancouver's Island, done by the Hudson's Bay Company ; or in Victoria, alias Port Phillip, the chosen representative of the people ; or in the Mauritius, building fortifications against a hostile population ; or in the fair isles of the Ionian Sea, enjoying . . . a life of luxurious ease and perfect tranquillity.'

The utter futility of attempting such an impossible task was best demonstrated by its results.

Their  
recom-  
menda-  
tions. (a)  
For politi-  
cal dis-  
orders—  
Responsible  
Govern-  
ment.

Obviously the sensible procedure was for the central Government to delegate its authority over local concerns to local bodies. 'Local self-government,' as Wakefield insisted, 'was the *sine qua non* of a tolerable colonial existence.'

The chronic collision between the Legislative and Executive parts of Government in the colonies could only be replaced by harmony when an efficient and popular Government was installed, in which the ministers of the Crown were responsible to the representatives of the people, and every detail of the administration was exposed to the free play of public opinion. 'The Crown

must consent,’ said Lord Durham, ‘to carry on the Government by those in whom the representative body has confidence.’ They were to enjoy the substance of power in all matters pertaining to that colony whose Government they formed. In all affairs, which did not directly involve the relations between the mother country and the colonies, the Governor was to be guided by their advice and they were to be responsible for such consequences as might result from the operation of the statutes he sanctioned on their advice. For such measures the Imperial Government could accept no responsibility, nor, if the Governor were to oppose them, could he expect any support from them. ‘Sound policy requires,’ said Molesworth,<sup>1</sup> ‘that this country should interfere as little as possible in the internal affairs of its colonies, and, above all, as little as possible with their pockets.’

The advantages of this concession were obvious to the ‘Theorists of 1830.’ The Local Government, representing the wishes of the majority of the governed, would be conversant with public opinion, and would only be likely to initiate such measures as would have public approval.

The old disputes about the Clergy Reserves, the monopolization of office by the ‘Family Compact,’ and the unsatisfactory finances of Upper Canada, would be settled in accordance with the wishes of the dominant majority in the Provinces. Should the Government then blunder, the responsibility would rest upon the shoulders of those who elected them, and a constitutional remedy

<sup>1</sup> Molesworth’s *Speeches*, p. 197.

The advantages of Responsible Government.

would be in their hands. In the Colonists would be bred the spirit of self-reliance, self-confidence, and independence, together with the becoming moderation which actual responsibility fosters. Those troubles which had a political origin, and were arresting the development of the colonies and embittering their relations with England, would be settled, and the mother country, no longer distressed by colonial grievances which her Government could neither comprehend nor remedy, might look out upon a politically satisfied Empire, whose extra-territorial policy she controlled.

The economic troubles in the colonies were attributed to the lack of Capital and Labour to develop their resources. They possessed unmeasured square miles of land, while there was a superabundance of capital and labour in the British Isles. English wealth was being invested in foreign countries, and often squandered in extravagant and chimerical schemes, and, side by side with it, in fearful and unnatural contrast, there existed the most appalling misery. 'I doubt,' said Charles Buller,<sup>1</sup> 'whether there ever before was in this country such a mass of intense physical suffering and moral degradation as is to be found in this metropolis, in the cellars and garrets of Liverpool and Manchester, and in the yet more wretched alleys of Glasgow.' This inanition, from which the labouring classes in Great Britain were perishing, was due to the exploitation of an unlimited supply of human labour by the capitalists of the 'Hungry Forties.'

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, p. 467.

Here, then, within the British Empire was an ample quantity of the three necessities of every community—land, labour, and capital. The problem which confronted the ‘theorists of 1830’ was so to use them that the British Empire might be developed and consolidated. Were British capital devoted to the development of the unlimited resources of these extensive dominions of the Crown, a new market would concurrently be created for the manufactured goods of the mother country, an impetus would be given to her industries, a constant supply of food-stuffs and raw materials would be assured, her mercantile marine would expand, her fields of employment would be extended, and the prospects of social and industrial peace would be enhanced. Meanwhile her surplus population, instead of languishing in destitution in the cellars of her great cities, might win for themselves a competency from the virgin soils of her distant territory. Thus the component parts of the vast Empire which encircles the globe would possess a truly British population and would be bound together by sentimental and material bonds. Such was the inspiring ideal of this illustrious school.

Now, as we have already observed, not only were such restrictions as existed upon the sale of colonial lands either ignored or ingeniously evaded, but the Colonial Office and Colonial Governors had alienated vast acreages from the Crown with lavish and mistaken generosity. The consequence was that land became so cheap that those who went out in the capacity of labourers were speedily able to become landowners, or demand exorbitant wages in con-

The old  
practice.



sequence of the scarcity of the supply of the commodity they alone could provide. Under these circumstances, capitalists would not invest their money in colonial enterprises. In the final analysis it was evident that 'a permanent supply of labour was the indispensable means of economical prosperity.'

This 'permanent supply of labour' Wakefield proposed to secure by a method, simple enough now, but then novel, original, and revolutionary. He advocated the sale of all lands for 'a sufficient and uniform price,' which would ensure capitalists 'constant and combined' labour by preventing labourers from becoming landowners too soon.

This 'uniform and sufficient price' was to vary according to circumstances, 'occasioning neither superabundance of people nor superabundance of land, but so limiting the quantity of land as to give the cheapest land a market value that would have the effect of compelling labourers to work some considerable time before they could become landowners.'<sup>1</sup>

That time would be determined by the rate of the increase in the population of the colony, which would depend upon the popularity of emigration in the mother country, which would be affected by the distance separating the colony from England, the cost of the passage, and such considerations. Wakefield was anxious to be just to the labourer. He desired to create an independent yeomanry as soon as circumstances would allow.

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, p. 339.

For that reason he wished to keep ‘ the sufficient price ’ as low as would serve his fundamental purpose. ‘ If you raised the price above the sufficient price,’ he stated to the House of Commons Committee in 1836, ‘ you would condemn the whole class of labourers to a longer term of service. It appears to me that a burden would be cast upon them in particular, and a very grievous one, that of being kept for a longer term than was necessary in the state of servants.’

Had this ‘ fixed and sufficient price ’ applied to such land as might be used for natural pasturage, the squatter would have been confronted with such a prohibitive cost that it would have been impossible for him to pursue his calling, and the chief source of the public and private wealth of such a colony as New South Wales would have been destroyed. But Wakefield foresaw this danger. ‘ According to the theory of the “ theorists of 1830,” ’ he wrote,<sup>1</sup> ‘ it is the extreme cheapness, not of natural pasturage, but of land for cultivation, which occasions scarcity of labour for hire. . . . According to their view of the matter, the words “ a *sufficient* price for the use of natural pasturage ” are unmeaning or nonsensical.’ They advocated the utmost liberty of use, but not the liberty of appropriation. Squatters might have the use of ‘ runs ’ for a fair rent; those who desired a freehold title to them would have to pay ‘ the sufficient price.’

This ‘ sufficient price ’ was to be uniform in its incidence. It was recognized that land would vary in value according to its position and

<sup>1</sup> *Art of Colonization*, p. 419.

Natural  
pasturage  
exempt  
from the  
fixed and  
sufficient  
price.

fertility, and that there might be several buyers for the same property. But even under those circumstances, the land was not to be sold at auction but at the fixed rate. Anything above that fixed price was condemned by Wakefield as a useless and mischievous tax on colonization. Moreover, he feared that the auction system would lead to competition for favoured lots, and the consequent expenditure of money which might be better spent in the development of the purchase. In the event of there being more than one applicant, the preference was to be given to the first comer, and, in the improbable contingency of two arriving simultaneously, they were to draw lots.

In fairness to the purchaser the utmost care was to be taken that the land was extensively, completely, and accurately surveyed. In all the colonies the survey system had been 'very mistaken in theory, defective in practice, and most extravagant in cost.'<sup>1</sup> Lord Durham had found the Survey Department in Lower Canada so thoroughly inefficient in its constitution as to be incapable of any valuable improvement. Scrupulous supervision of this department was therefore an essential feature of the new scheme.

With the money derived from these sales emigrants were to be brought out. There was absolutely no intention, Wakefield insisted, of imposing 'a sufficient and uniform price' in order to gain money for any particular purpose. The receipts would form 'a fund without a

Reasons  
for a  
fixed and  
uniform  
price.

Land to  
be care-  
fully  
surveyed.

(c) For  
the social  
grievances  
—(1) sys-  
tematic  
immigra-  
tion.

<sup>1</sup> *Art of Colonization*, p. 403.

destination’<sup>1</sup> which might be disposed of in whatever way the Government determined. He suggested, however, that it should be expended in conveying poor people of the labouring class from the mother country to the colonies. In order to expedite the arrival of such desirable labourers, Buller proposed to anticipate the proceeds of the land sales by a loan obtained from the Government at a moderate interest on the security of future sales.

Only emigrants who satisfied certain conditions were to be assisted. Young men and young women in equal numbers, preferably married, were deemed especially suitable. ‘In order that poor emigrants taken to a colony should be as valuable as possible, they ought to be young people, whose powers of labour would last as long as possible, and who would readily turn their hands to new employments. . . . By taking none but very young grown-up persons the maximum of value would be obtained for any given outlay.’<sup>2</sup>

These carefully selected emigrants were to be dispatched in seaworthy vessels, commanded by reliable officers, and equipped with due regard to the health and general comfort of the passengers. Wakefield recommended the appointment of resident Agent-Generals by the different Colonies to attend to their respective interests at the seat of the Empire, and assigned to them the superintendence of emigration as one of their duties.

Emigration was no longer to be ‘a shovelling out of paupers.’ Representatives of every grade of English society were to be encouraged to

<sup>1</sup> *Art of Colonization*, p. 376.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407-8.

take their place in the new community. But a  
 (2) The necessary preliminary to the consum-  
 abolition mation of so desirable an object was the  
 of trans- abolition of transportation. That sys-  
 portation. tem, which had been searchingly examined by a  
 Select Committee under the able presidency of Sir  
 William Molesworth in 1838, was emphatically  
 denounced by the new school as a standing insult  
 to the colonists in Australia, a menace to the  
 health of their body politic, and a formidable  
 obstacle to their economic prosperity and social  
 advancement. The Australian colonies were lan-  
 guishing for the want of men and women; but  
 emigrants, even of the humblest class, were  
 chary about seeking a new home in a penal settle-  
 ment.

The colonial society which the 'theorists of  
 1830' conceived as their ideal was an epitome  
 of society as it was in England.<sup>1</sup> The  
 Colonial masses were to contribute their labour,  
 society to be an but were to be encouraged by the  
 epitome of English presence, guided by the counsel, and  
 society. employed by the wealth of the opulent  
 and educated. Surrounded by those social fea-  
 tures to which he was accustomed, assured of a  
 school for the education of his children and a  
 church for his spiritual benefit, the ordinary  
 mechanic or labourer would not be an exile  
 yearning for his old home, and gradually acquiring  
 habits of thought and action foreign to English-  
 men, but the contented member of a community  
 characterized by the manners, institutions, reli-  
 gion, and ethical ideals peculiar to the mother  
 country.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Wakefield, Art of Colonization, p 116*

When these ideas became the governing principles of British Colonial policy, and not until then, the advocates of systematic colonization declared, the odious and hateful features of the rule of the Colonial Office would disappear, the political, economic, and social grievances of the colonies would be settled, cordial relations would be established between the mother country and her children, and Liberty would cement the walls of Empire.

The adoption of these ideas essential to the peace and well-being of the Empire.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ATTITUDE OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE NEW IDEAS

THE reforms suggested by the advocates of systematic colonization, which did not diminish the authority of the Colonial Office, were accepted almost immediately with slight modifications. It may be doubted whether those who took up his suggestion that the land should be sold at a fixed and uniform price were as purely animated as was Wakefield with the intention of securing labour for the development of the colonies. Their sympathy was perhaps more powerfully attracted by the prospect of securing a much-needed revenue so easily, although one-half of the money thus obtained was religiously set aside to form an emigration fund, and the remainder expended in the construction of such public works as would expedite the development of the country.

The land, however, was to be disposed of by auction at a minimum reserve price. Wakefield inveighed strongly against this mode of selling. 'Lord Grey,' he wrote,<sup>1</sup> 'who is the parent of this auction nuisance in our colonies, loves it as a mother does her rickety child, all the more when its deformities

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, p. 361.

are pointed out.' Colonial experience, however, proved conclusively that it was simply absurd to sell all lands at a fixed uniform price. Furthermore, the Colonial Office, eager to raise money, imposed a price upon natural pasturage, despite Wakefield's advice to the contrary. He denounced it as an unwise and oppressive tax; unwise, as it was a tax on the article of prime necessity in New South Wales life; oppressive, as it was imposed and maintained in spite of every kind of complaint and opposition from the colonists. By departing in this signal manner from his scheme, the Colonial Secretary created a grievance which provoked much dissension, and was only allayed by the curtailment of the powers of the mother country over colonial affairs.

A pronounced stimulus was given to emigration by the judicious expenditure of the money derived from the land sales. 'From this,' wrote Lord Grey, 'may fairly be dated the great and almost marvellous advance which the Australian colonies have made in population.'

The whole business of emigration was placed on a sound basis and carefully supervised. Whereas, in the past, it had been difficult to persuade a shipful of poor labourers to embark for so distant a part of the world as Australia, there were now more applicants for a passage than could be accommodated.

The transportation of convicts to New South Wales was abolished in 1840. In 1847 an attempt to revert to the old practice was made by Lord Grey, under the pressure of the necessity for penal

Pro-  
nounced  
stimulus  
given to  
emigra-  
tion.

System of  
trans-  
portation  
abolished.



accommodation, and upon the receipt of what he rightly called 'a remarkable report' from the Legislative Council of New South Wales. Public opinion, however, was so hostile that he abandoned his intention, observing parenthetically, that a concession was made to the inhabitants which they could not demand as a right. But, 'since Van Dieman's Land was founded for the express purpose of receiving convicts,' he refused to spare it the same ignominy. It was not until his retirement from office in 1852 that the small island was promised immediate relief. In 1867, with the cessation of transportation to Western Australia, the accursed system was abolished for ever.

The stigma which had been attached to emigration was thus removed, a great flood of newcomers to the gold-fields of Australia swamped the convict population, members of all grades of society turned their faces towards the dominion, schools were established, bishoprics were founded, and religious provision was made, on the principle of strict equality, for colonists of every denomination. The incubus of the past was removed; those institutions which have received the sanction of ages in England found no congenial soil in the colonies; the epitome of English society was never realized, but there grew up a robust democracy inspired by the best traditions of the British race.

But the root principle enunciated by 'the theorists of 1830,' which is so admirably enshrined in Lord Durham's classic Report, was regarded with suspicion and misgivings. Colonial autonomy

Colonial  
society  
—not an  
epitome  
of English  
society.

was incompatible with British ascendancy. The Colonial Office regarded it as the thin end of the wedge which would shatter its authority. Liberal opinion in the colonies applauded the Earl's recommendation. 'The report has circulated for some months in the colonies,' wrote Howe,<sup>1</sup> 'and I feel it a duty to state the grounds of my belief that his lordship, in attributing many, if not all, of our colonial evils and disputes to the absence of responsibility in our rulers to those whom they are called upon to govern, is entirely warranted by the knowledge of every intelligent colonist; that the remedy pointed out, while it possesses the merits of being extremely simple and eminently British—making them so responsible, is the only cure for those evils short of arrant quackery; the only secure foundation upon which the power of the Crown can be established on this continent, so as to defy internal machination and foreign assault.'

Attitude of  
the English  
Govern-  
ment  
towards  
the root  
principle  
of the new  
teaching  
—that Re-  
sponsible  
Government  
could be  
granted.

Reception  
accorded  
the sug-  
gestion of  
Colonial  
Reformers.

But the idea of Responsible Government had only become an integral principle of the British Constitution half a century before. It was as incompatible with that idea of a patriot king which was implanted in the mind of George III by the teachings of Bolingbroke, fostered by his mother's constant exhortations and his own inclinations, and practised by him for at least twenty years, as with the Divine Right theory of Charles I or William II

Novelty  
of the  
idea in  
England.

<sup>1</sup> Egerton and Grant, *Canadian Constitutional Development*, p. 192.

## 88 ATTITUDE OF IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

of Germany. When we remember that William Pitt the younger was the first Prime Minister of England who accepted that title with a full appreciation of all its implications and a steadfast determination to be the responsible head of the Government of the country, we can understand the reluctance of even Whig statesmen to confer such extensive powers upon colonial Governments. They, and some political leaders in the colonies also, were prepared to allow the dependencies an authority equivalent to that possessed by the municipalities in England, but they perceived that, were self-government granted them, the colonial Governor would be as effectively stripped of the substance of power by the local Parliament as the Sovereign was by the Imperial Legislature, and that, under existing conditions, was tantamount to depriving the Colonial Office of its cherished authority.

Under the prevailing system the Governor always tried to conduct the government according to the policy of the Imperial Cabinet, and his first concern was the maintenance of the unity of the Empire. This did not imply that he would govern in opposition to the interests of the colonists. It was in fact to his own advantage to redress their real and dissipate their imaginary grievances. 'According to the system proposed, . . . the advisers of the Lieutenant-Governor would be . . . creatures of the prevailing faction in the Assembly, advising the Governor altogether with the view to the wishes of the House for the moment, regardless of the opinions of the

Objections  
to the  
suggestion.

(a) The  
representa-  
tive of the  
Imperial  
Govern-  
ment  
would be  
subordinate  
to the  
prevailing  
party in the  
Assembly.

supreme Parliament, or those of the Imperial Cabinet,—and having (though nominally subordinate), the power of forcing all their measures upon the Governor.’<sup>1</sup> The consequence, it was imagined, would be disastrous to the Empire. The Sovereign would possess no confidential servant in the colony, while the ministers of the Crown, who were, it was maintained, responsible for the maintenance of the Imperial connexion, could fulfil their duties only so long as they retained the confidence of the majority in the popular House. In the event of the Governor refusing to be advised by the Executive, they could resign. If they were returned again with a majority, and he continued fixed in his previous opinions, an impasse of a very unpleasant nature would be reached.

And from whom, it was asked, was ‘the prevailing party’ to be chosen? In England political leaders thought for and led the people. There, too, were two parties, with clearly defined political platforms. But in British North America there was no such party system. ‘Local and sectional interests’ would be ‘felt too strongly and directly in elective bodies, in small communities,’ it was held, ‘to permit of consistent legislation on general principles.’ Moreover, the objects to be gained during the short period for which the majority were paramount would be of too much consequence, compared with distinct general results, to permit of the perfectly unchecked course which would result from Responsible

<sup>1</sup> Egerton and Grant, *Canadian Constitutional Development*, p. 178.

Government.<sup>1</sup> In a heated and discordant chamber, where every second or third member had different ideas on important questions, which of the contending parties could be asked to form a Government?

Furthermore, any satisfactory division of powers between the Imperial and Colonial authorities was thought impracticable. At best it could be but artificial, and would provoke endless disputes, terminating in irreconcilable estrangement. Such friction would only intensify the existing racial hatred between the French and English in Lower Canada, and heighten the joy with which the French would sever their connexion with England. 'Their lordships might depend,' said the Duke of Wellington in 1840, 'that local Responsible Government and the sovereignty of Great Britain were entirely incompatible.'<sup>2</sup> He was a reactionary old Tory, but even the liberal-minded Lord John Russell was very pessimistic as to the outcome. 'If the Executive Council are to be named according to the will of the Assembly,' he exclaimed in 1838, 'what is to become of the orders given by the Imperial Government and the Governor of the colony? It would be better to say at once "Let the two countries separate" than for us to pretend to govern the colony afterwards.'

The policy of centralized control impossible. And yet it was impossible to adhere to the old centralization policy. The political conditions in Canada were in a chaotic state, and the Government had already

<sup>1</sup> Egerton and Grant, *Canadian Constitutional Development*, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Holland's *Imperium et Libertas*, p. 111.

been obliged to resort to force to suppress rebellions. Lord Durham and Joseph Howe both insisted that the only effective remedy was Responsible Government. 'Give us this truly British privilege,' said Howe, 'and colonial grievances will soon become a scarce article in the English market.' It would not strengthen the centrifugal forces, but create a desire for a closer union with 'their brethren over the water.'<sup>1</sup>

The mind of the English Government was profoundly stirred. Mindful of Russell's statement in 1838, we are struck by the change of tone in his letter to Lord Sydenham the Governor of Canada in 1839. 'The Queen's Government have no desire to thwart the representative assemblies of British North America in their measures of reform and improvement,' he wrote.<sup>2</sup> 'They have no wish to make those Provinces the resource for patronage at home. They are earnestly intent upon giving advantages to the talent and character of leading persons in the colonies. . . . Her Majesty has no desire to maintain any system of policy among her North American subjects which opinion condemns. . . . Your Excellency must be aware that there is no surer way of earning the approbation of the Queen, than by maintaining the harmony of the Executive with the Legislative authorities. . . . The Governor and Assembly must each exercise a wise moderation. The Governor must only oppose the wishes of the Assembly

<sup>1</sup> Egerton and Grant, *Canadian Constitutional Development*, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

where the honour of the Crown or the interests of the Empire are deeply concerned, and the Assembly must be ready to modify some of its measures for the sake of harmony and from a reverent attachment to the authority of Great Britain.' And yet in the same letter, he wrote, 'You may encounter much difficulty in subduing the excitement which prevails on the question of what is called "Responsible Government." I have to instruct you, however, to refuse any explanation which might be construed to imply acquiescence in the petitions and addresses upon this subject.' He was only half convinced of the wisdom of granting Responsible Government, and was still halting between two opinions.

The Union Act of 1840 reflects the indecision of his mind. In it no provision was made for the institution of Responsible Government, nor was there any allusion to it in the royal instructions issued to Lord Sydenham, Sir C. Bagot, Sir C. Metcalfe, or Lord Elgin. It is a curious and interesting fact that this fundamental principle of political government in the British Empire has no legal sanction. It is explicitly embodied in no constitution; its practice rests on no written law, but on usage alone. It was omitted, as we have noticed, from the Union Act of 1840 because those who framed that instrument were not converted to the principle. It found no place in subsequent constitutions because, 'though very well understood for practical purposes, it had no definite meaning in law, and it was therefore impossible to say what would be a fulfilment of the condition, within the technical

Their  
indecision  
reflected  
in the  
Union Act.

Responsible  
Government has  
no legal  
sanction.

sense, which might be put by legal interpretation on the words.' <sup>1</sup>

The first Governor of United Canada, who had to interpret the Union Act, had no sympathy with the political aspirations of the Canadians. He could not conceive of himself as an Imperial officer where Imperial affairs were concerned, and as a quasi-sovereign when only local matters were under consideration. 'I have already done much to put down "Responsible Government" in its inadmissible sense,' he wrote to Lord Russell,<sup>2</sup> 'namely, the demand that the Council shall be responsible to the Assembly and that the Government shall take their advice and be bound by it.' It was not until the advent of Lord Durham's son-in-law, Lord Elgin, in 1846 that Canada became autonomous. He determined to favour no political party, to receive courteously as his advisers those who commanded the confidence of the Assembly, and to accept any measure of which they approved unless he felt absolutely certain that it was repugnant to Imperial interests or public morals, and, on the latter count, would be rejected by the majority of the people. He thus described the principles by which he was governed. 'I give to my Ministers all constitutional support frankly and without reserve, and the benefit of the best advice that I can afford them in their difficulties. In return for this I expect that they will, in so far as it is possible for them to do so, carry out my views

<sup>1</sup> Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominion*, vol. i, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Egerton and Grant, p. 279.



for the maintenance of the connexion and the advancement of the interests of the Province. On this tacit understanding we have acted harmoniously together up to this time, although I have never concealed from them that I intend to do nothing which may prevent me from working cordially with their opponents if they are forced upon me. That Ministers and Opposition should occasionally change places is of the essence of our constitutional system, and it is probably the most conservative element which it contains. By subjecting all sections of politicians in their turn to official responsibilities, it obliges heated partisans to place some restraints on passion, and to confine within the bounds of decency the patriotic zeal with which, when out of place, they are wont to be animated.'

This is an admirable statement of the relations which should, and do now exist, between the vice-regal representative and the Ministers of the Crown. It seems fitting that it should emanate from the son-in-law of Lord Durham. It is idle to descant upon the eloquent testimony of experience to the wisdom of the far-seeing statesmen who first enunciated the theory. As the British Constitution has been slowly amended when the demand for an amendment has become sufficiently sustained and incessant, and is thus the elaborate and happy product of centuries of laborious experience; so Responsible Government has gradually become the universal practice in the several Dominions of the Crown in response to an incessant demand and as a result of its proved utility.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ADOPTION OF FREE TRADE AND THE REPUDIATION OF THE OLD COMMERCIAL POLICY

THE practice of Responsible Government in Canada signified the decline of the old colonial system. Two of its distinct features, the preferential tariffs and the Navigation Laws, those potent agencies devised by English statesmen to make their country self-sustained and self-dependent, were still conspicuous. But, with the adoption of Free Trade, these stout pillars of the old system were demolished. It fell to give place to the new commercial and colonial policies which have since obtained.

It would be difficult to estimate exactly to what extent the ideas underlying the new fiscal policy determined the attitude of the English Whigs towards the colonists' agitations for autonomy. In reality, the Colonial Reformers and the Manchester School were each expressing their allegiance to the fundamental doctrine of 'natural liberty' when they protested against State interference in their political and commercial concerns, and demanded that they should be left free to pursue what they considered their own interests in their own way. Both Joseph Howe and the wealthy

The  
demolition  
of two  
other stout  
pillars of  
the old  
system.

Relation  
between  
the adop-  
tion of  
Free Trade  
and the  
granting  
of Re-  
sponsible  
Govern-  
ment.

manufacturer of Lancashire might have quoted Adam Smith's general principles in support of their aspirations. Reviewing the events of those momentous years from our remote vantage point, we can explain England's departure from the practice of the past in granting those of her colonies, able to govern themselves, the full control of their own destinies, by the coincidence in time of the Free Trade question at home and the yearning for political freedom in the colonies, seeing in each manifestations of the movement of ideas in favour of liberty in every field of human activity which is so distinctive of the modern age. But the men working in the political laboratories of the day could have no such Pisgah view. Doubtless they were unconsciously, perhaps consciously, moved by spiritual tendencies, but we find none of them philosophically examining the basic principle of natural liberty with all its implications. The devotees of the new gospel were bent on the abolition of the protective tariffs and the Navigation Laws, and, incidentally, on the deprivation of the colonists of considerable commercial advantages, but they failed for some considerable time to realize that they were logically bound to release the colonists from all commercial restrictions that they might be free to adopt the commercial policy best suited to their interests. But England's colonial policy in the nineteenth century was typically English in that it was never enunciated in all its fullness by a political philosopher and consistently and immediately applied in political practice. It has been pieced together very slowly in accordance with the recommendations of experience. Lord Durham's conception

of Responsible Government was much narrower than that which obtained fifteen years after the publication of his Report. Slowly, very slowly, English statesmen were feeling their way. In 1846 the immediate business of the Free Traders was to release British commerce from its fetters. Future developments could be left to the fullness of time.

The ablest and most persuasive exponents of the new fiscal doctrine were Richard Cobden and

John Bright. They directed their attacks chiefly against the Corn Laws and the sugar duties, in accordance with which a preference was given to the Canadian farmers and West Indian planters. These laws, they insisted, raised the price of these commodities, and so increased the cost of living in England. The labourer who had to pay so much for his sugar and bread, had less to spend on beer, tobacco, boots, and other articles. The consequence

was that the income which would have been derived from the duties on such luxuries as tobacco, and the demand for other manufactures made in England, was diminished. Moreover, were foreigners allowed to import their surplus corn and sugar they would have the wherewithal to purchase England's manufactured articles, and thereby stimulate the manufacturing industries, give employment to many more people, and encourage foreign nations to continue to develop their natural resources and supply England with food materials and raw stuffs rather than engage in the manufacture of their own articles to the detriment of the British

merchants. The mutual exchange of the commodities which each was thus best fitted to produce would not only be natural, but would promote closer international relations and foster international amity.

The preference of the Tories for free-grown over slave-grown sugar was discounted by two facts. They had lodged no objection against the introduction of tobacco and cotton from the slave states of America, and had themselves opposed the emancipation of the slaves. In fact, they had a rather difficult fortress to defend. It was impossible for them to deny the excellent platform argument of the Manchester School that the duties were a tax on food which chiefly benefited the wealthy owners of broad acres in England and extensive plantations in the West Indies. Their plea for protection for agriculture, in order that England might be independent of other countries in the event of war, was neutralized by the fact that since Trafalgar she had been the unchallenged Mistress of the Seas. Since it was highly unlikely that she would be at war with the whole world at once, she could keep her sea routes open to the ports of neutral countries, and thus secure a permanent and sufficient supply of food-stuffs. They asserted that since the land was the mother of men, national health and the national safety alike demanded that the agricultural industry should be protected in order to discourage the rural population from drifting into the whirlpool of urban life. This argument was met by biting criticisms of the homes of the labourers in their own villages and the wages they received. Their arguments for a gradual lowering of

duties in favour of those nations which made equal concessions, were brushed aside by the ardent advocates of the policy of fighting hostile tariffs with free imports, who, with unconfirmed optimism, maintained that once other countries saw how England was prospering under Free Trade they would immediately follow her example.

The Protectionists' most cogent argument was that the adoption of Free Trade would mean the subversion of a long-established colonial policy and might lead to the disintegration of the Empire. 'If you look properly at the relations between yourselves and the Colonies,' said Sir Robert Peel,<sup>1</sup> 'you must consider your colonies en-

titled to be put on a different footing from foreign countries, and that it is perfectly fair to give to articles of colonial production a preference in your markets over articles the produce of foreign countries. I am disposed to think even that you ought to carry the principle of assimilation, if you can, so far as to consider the colonies an integral part of the Empire for all commercial purposes.' Colonial interests were most vigor-

ously championed in these momentous debates by Sir Howard Douglas, an ex-colonial Governor. 'Much has been said,' he declared in the House,<sup>2</sup> 'of commercial unions, hostile tariffs, leagues, and rival combinations against the commerce, manufactures, and power of this country. Sir, in the vastness and unbounded resources of our colonial Empire, we

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Holland's *Fall of Protection*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

possess a league which may defy all rivalry, and defeat all combination and hostility, provided we adhere firmly to the great principles by which this colonial Empire has been formed, and by which only it can be kept together.' He had often imagined that it might really be possible to treat the colonies like counties, not only in direct trade with the United Kingdom, but in commercial intercourse with each other by Free Trade amongst ourselves under a reasonable degree of Protection from without, and so resolve the United Kingdom and all her colonies and possessions into a commercial union such as might defy all rivalry and defeat all combinations. Moreover, the extension of preferential tariffs would encourage the investment of British capital on British soil, and deflect the tide of emigration to the British colonies, which would speedily develop into virile, robust communities, devoted to the interests of the Empire as a whole.

To buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest markets was an attractive maxim, but the commercial intercourse between two countries depended upon their political relations, and, consequently, the British manufacturer might at any time find those markets in which he had been accustomed to dispose of his goods closed against him. But were the colonies developed and made the favoured markets, the manufacturers would be exposed to no perils of such a kind, and, moreover, would be benefiting their own kith and kin rather than foreigners. It seemed a selfish policy, it would probably be less lucrative than complete Free Trade; but such considerations were more than

Defence of  
greater  
importance  
than  
opulence.

counterbalanced by the facts that defence was more important than opulence, and that complete Free Trade and the international fellowship and good feeling which would flow from it were admirable ideals which could not be realized in the world as it was. Germany and the United States were not animated by such academic and philanthropic motives. The former had formed a Zollverein which had been a pronounced success, and the latter had grown in wealth and numbers behind protective tariff walls.

It was feared that the Empire would virtually be dissolved should the British electors become converted to the teaching of the Manchester School. The colonists could no longer be asked to give a preference to British goods when they received none in British markets, nor could they be expected to tolerate any longer the restrictions imposed by the Navigation Laws upon the growth of their mercantile marine and the mobility of their oversea trade. Furthermore, it was quite possible that neither they nor those at home would be able to discover any good reason for continuing their connexion. They might even prefer to come to some commercial understanding with other states. The Free Traders recognized this possibility without disquietude. Their main concern was that England should be free to pursue what they were convinced were her national interests. Imperial unity might be sacrificed, but freedom of trade would be secured.

In 1846 the Corn Laws were repealed, and the events which Sir Howard Douglas had predicted soon came to pass. Already in 1843 the Cana-

The  
danger of  
Imperial  
disinte-  
gration.



dians, in response to the promptings of a quickening national consciousness which had been promoted by the granting of self-government in 1840, had asserted a claim, which had been recognized, to some voice in the settlement of their fiscal affairs. From 1831 to 1842 the Americans had transported their wheat across the Canadian frontier, and had thus had it admitted to England under the reduced duty imposed on Canadian produce. The English agriculturist class protested against this back-door competition, and the Government, in response to their appeal, decided to block its entry. They came to an understanding accordingly with the Canadian Legislature by which that body agreed to levy a duty of 3s. a quarter on American wheat crossing their frontier, and, in return, the English Government were to pass a measure by which all wheat cleared at Canadian ports might enter England at a fixed duty of 1s. instead of a graduated duty of 1s. to 5s. as hitherto. Peel defended the action of his Government in allowing the Canadians to pass the 3s. duty in the following words: 'Were they not the best judges of their own interests? If not why have you permitted them to legislate, to sit as a popular Assembly?' 'There is a disposition on your part,' he said to the Opposition, 'to undervalue the colonial Legislatures. They are popular Assemblies. While they exist they must be considered as best judges of colonial affairs.'<sup>1</sup> This speech is remarkable as perhaps the first recognition of the most important fact that the self-governing colonies were no longer to be treated as dependents

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Holland's *Fall of Protection*, p. 126.

but to be conferred with as semi-independent, though closely allied, states.

The fall of Protection was accompanied by the cessation of preferences in the United Kingdom to colonial produce. Immediate distress was caused in Canada. Assured of a certain and favourable market for their flour and wheat, many Canadians had sunk their capital in the erection of mills, warehouses, and forwarding establishments. Within three years the promised protection was removed and they were ruined.

Cessation  
of pre-  
ferences  
to colonial  
produce  
by the  
United  
Kingdom.

Economic  
distress in  
Canada. America was quick to see her opportunity. Produce was transported to and exported from her own harbours at cheaper freights than if dispatched via the St. Lawrence. Canada's revenue was so diminished that the Province almost became bankrupt. The Canadians were bitterly incensed. England, they observed, apparently preferred to favour the children who had deserted and maltreated her rather than those who had remained faithful. 'I believe,' wrote Lord Elgin, 'that the conviction that they would be better off if they were annexed is almost universal amongst the commercial classes at present.' The colonists demanded that they should be released from the obligation of favouring British manufactured goods.

The Imperial Government recognized the justice of their request, and in 1846 a Bill was introduced giving the Queen in Council power to assent to any Acts passed by the colonial Legislatures by which the 5 per cent. or 7 per cent. preference in favour of British goods might be abolished. The revolutionary character

Abandon-  
ment of  
Preferen-  
tial trade.

of this proposal was scarcely perceived by members of the House. An ex-Chancellor, Mr. Goulbourn, alone realized its significance. They were called upon to give up, he pointed out, the great imperial principle that the trade of the colonies ought to be regulated by the Legislature of the mother country. His objection, which was perfectly true, was unheeded, and the Bill became law.

The next bulwark of the old system to be swept away was the Navigation Laws. In 1847 the Canadian Legislature had petitioned Her Majesty to sanction the free use of the navigation of the river St. Lawrence by all nations, and, to that end, to recommend to the Imperial Parliament the repeal of the Navigation Laws so far as they in any manner related to or affected the colonies. The Canadian farmer, as Lord Elgin pointed out, could not reconcile it to his sense of right that, after being deprived of all protection for his produce in the British markets, he should be subject to a hostile and discriminating duty in the guise of a law for the protection of navigation. 'So general,' he continued, 'is the belief that under the present circumstances of our commercial condition the colonists pay a heavy pecuniary fine for their fidelity to Great Britain, that nothing but the existence, to an unwonted degree, of political contentment of the masses has prevented the cry for annexation spreading like wildfire through the Province.' The Imperial Government recognized that not only were they alienating the colonists, but that other nations like America had copied their example and were passing Naviga-

tion Laws against them. Moreover, they felt that England's sea power and mercantile marine were sufficiently strong to dispense with such assistance, and accordingly the Navigation Laws were repealed in 1849.

## CHAPTER IX

### 'THE COLONIAL POLICY OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S ADMINISTRATION'

#### (a) *The Struggle for Responsible Government in Australia and South Africa*

WITH the abolition of the Corn Laws and Navigation Laws and the institution of Responsible Government in Canada, the destruction of the old system seemed complete. The apparent destruction of the old system. England had thus publicly acknowledged the justice of the Canadians' demands, and, incidentally, the failure of her policy of centralized control, and definitely repudiated the theory that it was to her advantage to give her colonies a preference in her market or to reserve to herself their carrying trade. Those colonies, whose members felt able to govern themselves, reasonably hoped that what had been granted to Canada would not be withheld from them, and that the English Government, in accordance with its *laissez-faire* principles, would leave them to frame the fiscal policy most conducive, in their judgement, to their own interests.

But they under-estimated the vitality of old ideas and the intense love of authority which characterized the Colonial Office. It was only very gradually, and, indeed, with considerable reluctance, that the mother country officially recognized the implications of Responsible Govern-

ment. Even Lord Durham did not fully perceive the scope and vista of the principle he himself enunciated. He reserved to the Imperial Government 'the constitution of the form of Government,—the regulation of foreign relations, and of trade with the mother country, the other British colonies, and foreign nations, and the disposal of the public lands.'<sup>1</sup> With one exception, all these functions were within a comparatively short period to be delegated to the colonial Legislatures, but not without a struggle between them and the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Lord Grey's volumes on *The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration* give us a lucid statement of the views of Her Majesty's advisers on the disputes which arose between them and the Colonial Reformers over the logical development of the vital principle of autonomy. A man of strong personality, clear and confirmed opinions, and resolute in his determination to protect England's interests from what he considered the selfish ambitions of the colonials, Lord Grey soon stirred the organs of public opinion in the various colonies to the liveliest expressions of resentment. His sincerity, his earnestness in advancing the interests of the colonies, as he understood them, was beyond question. He failed dismally simply because he attempted an impossible task. He was one of those who thought that, even if the colonists should ultimately enjoy

The vitality of old ideas and the intense love of authority which characterized the Colonial Office.

The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration.

The character and ideas of Lord Grey.

<sup>1</sup> *Report*, vol. ii, p. 282.

the freedom they claimed, it was advisable that they should be prepared for it, should be put through an educative process, lest, once they entered into their full estate, they might abuse the liberties then gained. This attitude was most irritating to the colonists, and they attacked him with unmeasured fury. They demanded Responsible Government with all its implications, which was equivalent to asking for almost all those powers reserved by Lord Durham to the Imperial Legislature.

The English Government, however, despite the logic of Free Trade, continued steadfast in the belief that the regulation of the commercial policy of the Empire was the sole concern of the Parliament sitting at Westminster. The Act of 1846 was not regarded as conferring upon a self-governing colony the control of its fiscal policy, but merely as empowering it to abolish differential duties in favour of the complete Free Trade which it was believed it would adopt. There was no intention of allowing the colonists to frame tariff laws for themselves. 'It has always been held to be one of the principal functions of the Imperial Legislature and Government,' wrote Lord Grey,<sup>1</sup> 'to determine what is to be the commercial policy of the Empire at large, and to prescribe to the various colonial legislatures such rules as are necessary for carrying that policy into effect. . . . When Parliament, after a protracted discussion of many years, finally determined upon abandoning the former policy of

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Policy of Lord J. Russell's Administration*, vol. i, pp. 280-1.

endeavouring to promote the commerce of the Empire by an artificial system of restrictions, and upon adopting in its place the policy of Free Trade it did not abdicate the duty and the power of regulating the commercial policy, not only of the United Kingdom, but of the British Empire. The common interest of all parts of that extended Empire requires that its commercial policy should be the same throughout its numerous dependencies.'

In 1849 the Legislature of New Brunswick proposed to grant bounties in order to encourage certain branches of industry, and also to impose differential duties upon certain importations from the United States similar to those placed by that country upon their imports, in the hope that, by such retaliation, a more liberal exchange of commodities would be brought about. Her Majesty's Government allowed the bounty to be paid since it was of limited duration, but instructed the vice-regal representative in New Brunswick to refuse his assent to any further measures of a similar kind. The Legislature protested vigorously against such capricious interference by the Imperial Government with what they deemed purely local matters, but the Government refused to cancel their instructions, because they were of the opinion that the adoption of such a policy by the colonies would not encourage foreign nations to embrace Free Trade, that one colony might legislate against another and so promote ill feeling, that such artificial fostering of any industry would ultimately be to the detriment of the colony, and that such measures would be hostile to the

Interfer-  
ence with  
the fiscal  
policy of  
(a) New  
Brunswick.



commercial policy which had received the sanction of the Imperial Parliament.

Newfoundland's petition that stringent measures should be taken to prevent foreign vessels, and especially those of the United States, from fishing within the limits of the fisheries to which British subjects had an exclusive right, received an equally unsympathetic hearing. Lord Grey believed that England had an indisputable right to exclude any but British subjects from fishing within a certain distance of the coast of British territory, but thought that the enforcement of that right would not be calculated to promote the interests of either the mother country or the colonists. Such jealous fears of competition were only consonant with the narrow and erroneous fiscal policy which had been abandoned for ever. He could see no more advantage in protecting fishermen from competition than in protecting farmers, planters, or manufacturers from the same wholesome stimulus.

The sugar colonies suffered more than any other part of the British Dominions by the adoption of this system of personal and commercial freedom. The abolition of the slave trade in 1807 was the first check their extending cultivation and prosperity had received. In 1834 the emancipation of the negroes enhanced the cost of production and diminished the quantity of labour. Then, to crown their misfortunes, the planters learned of the Act of 1846, whose object was to provide for the immediate reduction and ultimate abolition of the heavy differential duty which was levied on foreign sugar as compared with that produced in the British Dominions,

(b) New-  
foundland.

(c) The  
West  
Indies.

and, further, to put an end to the distinction established by a previous Act between foreign sugar the produce of countries in which slavery did or did not prevail. A social and industrial fabric which had been built up on Slavery and Protection could not easily adjust itself to Emancipation and Free Trade. The commercial disasters, and the panic which ensued, induced the Government to arrest the operation of their measures, but it was merely a postponement; no appeal from the planters threatened with ruin could move them from their determination to abolish all restrictions on commercial freedom. Measures dealing with the introduction of Coolie labour were sanctioned, after elaborate provisions had been incorporated in them by which the indentured employé would be stimulated to industrious application, and the employer would be indemnified for any loss he might sustain in the event of the imported labourer becoming inoculated with the spirit of those sun-baked islands, and refusing to do sufficient work. But on no account would they deviate from the commercial policy to which they were pledged. The staple industry of the West Indies was paralysed. Some of the islands, especially the Barbadoes, adjusted themselves to the new conditions; but most, and more especially Jamaica, the richest and most fertile of them, never recovered from the fatal blow struck them by the commercial policy of the doctrinaire Whigs.

How profound must this change in the economic ideas of British statesmen have seemed to the West Indian planter who recalled to mind the Molasses Act of 1733! The only fundamental

point common to each law was that each was made at Westminster by a Parliament in which neither the one time nor the present colonists had any representation. Like the Americans a hundred years before, they were allowed no voice in the determination of the policy which so closely affected their material interests. Lord Grey, quick to perceive the mote in another's eye, but not considering the beam in his own, insisted, with characteristic lucidity, that the original difference with the colonists arose almost entirely from an endeavour to uphold the commercial policy then in force. That commercial policy had been entirely changed, but he was intent upon forcing the one which had replaced it upon the colonists, irrespective of their wishes or local requirements. The planters failed to understand the universal philanthropy of the British Government in matters of trade. Their self-interests and their loyalty and attachment to the Empire became opposed, and their attachment suffered. They, and other classes in the colonies, like the commercial men in Canada, came seriously to doubt whether it was to their interest to remain in the British Empire, and began to favour annexation to the United States. To such a pass had Her Majesty's Government, actuated, as was George Grenville, by the best of intentions, brought England's second colonial Empire.

The colonists of New South Wales at the same time were vigorously denouncing the interference of Lord Grey in what they deemed their local concerns. He maintained that their Crown lands

were estates which the Government of Great Britain, as the trustee of the British people, was entitled to control. He also tried to meet their demand for a more liberal constitution by submitting one of his own construction for their approval. They emphatically denied his claim to control their waste lands, and as emphatically rejected the proposed constitution in the making of which they had had no voice, and which, in reality, reduced rather than enlarged their privileges.

The immediate cause of the important dispute as to the ownership of the Crown lands was a regulation by Governor Gipps by which squatters were charged £10 per annum for each 'run' of that 'natural pasturage,' to tax which, Wakefield had declared, was unwise and oppressive. Pastoralists were permitted to buy the freehold of their homestead selection of 320 acres, but they were given no fixed tenure of the remainder of their 'run.' They were naturally annoyed when forced to pay a higher rent and disallowed any fixity of tenure, but, as Rusden points out,<sup>1</sup> 'the sting was more in the underlying principle than in the amount of the additional burdens proposed.' The fundamental question referred to the control of the waste lands.

Lord Durham reserved it to the Imperial Parliament. 'The country which has founded and maintained these colonies at a vast expense of blood and treasure,' he wrote,<sup>2</sup> 'may justly expect its compensation in turning their unap-

<sup>1</sup> *History of Australia*, vol. ii, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> *Report*, vol. ii, p. 13.

propriated resources to the account of its own redundant population; they are the rightful

The  
opinions  
of Lord  
Durham  
and Lord  
Grey as  
to the  
ownership.

patrimony of the English people, the ample appanage which God and Nature have set aside in the New World for those whose lot has assigned them but insufficient portions in the Old. Under wise and free institutions, these great

advantages may yet be secured to your Majesty's subjects; and a connexion secured by the link of kindred origin and mutual benefits may continue to bind to the British Empire the ample territories of its North American Provinces, and the large and flourishing population by which they

The  
Crown  
lands an  
estate of  
which the  
British  
Govern-  
ment was  
a trustee  
for all the  
subjects of  
the Crown.

will assuredly be filled.' Lord Grey voiced the view of the English Government in unmistakable language. 'It seems to be both just and wise,' he wrote,<sup>1</sup> 'that the Imperial Government and Legislature should not, at too early a period, transfer to the local authorities the power of determining under what

regulations the Crown lands in the colonies should be disposed of. These lands constitute a vast estate, which has been acquired, and to which all the value it possesses has been given, by the very large expense which has been incurred by the mother country in establishing, maintaining, and protecting its colonies. This estate the Crown holds as trustee for the benefit of all its subjects, not merely of the few thousands who may at this moment inhabit a particular colony, but of the whole British people whether resident at

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Policy of Lord J. Russell's Administration*, vol. i, p. 318.

home or in the colonies ; and it is the duty of the servants of the Crown and of Parliament to take care that the magnificent property thus held in trust for the good of the whole Empire shall be wisely and carefully administered with a view to that object, and not improvidently wasted or sacrificed to the rapacity of a few individuals.'

It was feared that, were the ownership of these huge territories granted absolutely to a few small communities, expansion by immigration and settlement would be discouraged. For these communities might not be anxious to spend their revenues on the introduction of newcomers, who would compete with them for positions and possibly lower their wages and injure their prospects of a livelihood. The present attitude of the Australian workman to immigration, which is simply indispensable to Australia's development and security, proves how well grounded was this fear.

Furthermore, as Grey pointed out, among the reasons which led England to expend her resources in winning and retaining her colonial possessions, was the desire to provide a home for her emigrants and a market for her industries. It was feared that this object would be defeated if they acceded to this colonial request. Subsequent events have proved that this fear was not baseless. Canada offers the same liberal terms to American as to British immigrants, with the result that her central section consists of people whom it will take her many years to impregnate with the national and

Colonial  
ownership  
might  
mean the  
discourage-  
ment of  
immigra-  
tion and  
settlement.

Colonial  
lands  
acquired  
by Eng-  
land as a  
home for  
her sur-  
plus popu-  
lation  
and a  
market for  
her goods.

Imperial spirit with which her population in the East and the West are imbued. Her sentimental connexion with the mother country has thus been weakened.

Moreover Governor Gipps, who regarded himself in this connexion as the stalwart champion of the rights of the Crown against the demands of a few selfish provincialists, suspected that Wentworth and the Legislative Council desired the administration of the waste lands to be entirely in their own hands in order that they might advance their own interests. He was not likely to forget Wentworth's attempt to secure for himself 20,000,000 acres in New Zealand at the rate of 100 acres for a farthing. Returns, too, had shown that in 1845 four squatters between them occupied 7,750,460 acres, and that fifty-six of the largest holders held 12,110 square miles of the country. Their influence was paramount in the Council, and he feared that, if they were given the opportunity, they might use it in a manner inimical to the best interests of the colony. From his point of view, and Lord Grey saw eye to eye with him, it was preposterous for a few members of the Empire to seek to take control of such limitless areas into their own hands because they happened to be on the spot to use them, it may be, as they saw fit, without any guarantee that their interests and the interests of the nation which founded the settlement would coincide. Equity and common sense alike seemed to demand that they should be regarded as an extension of the soil of the United Kingdom to be used to the advantage of the whole Empire.

And yet to assume such a position was to ignore a vital factor of the problem. Many leagues of ocean rolled between the Government and those affected by their laws, who, although Englishmen or the sons of Englishmen, were called upon to obey edicts in the formulation of which they had no voice and to contribute money over the expenditure of which they had no control. From the colonists' point of view it was the

Argu-  
ments of  
Grey and  
Gipps  
ignored  
vital  
factors  
of the  
problem.

(a) The  
love of  
Britons  
for their  
political  
liberty.

reassertion of the royal prerogative claimed by Charles I and a gross violation of their constitutional liberties. Their opinion found expression in Wentworth's resolution, 'That the right claimed by the Governor to impose arbitrary and unlimited imposts for the occupation of Crown Lands affected the vital interests of the whole community, and rendered the right of imposing taxes by the representatives of the people almost nugatory.'

Moreover the English Government was unable to gauge the public feelings of the governed, and might readily be won to the opinions of a colonial party wealthy enough to reach their ear when uninformed of those counter-arguments which only a knowledge of local conditions could supply. Lord Grey's Land Act of 1847 affords a striking case in point. As a result of that unfortunate measure there 'was placed in the hands of a comparatively few men a power fraught with incalculable danger to the generations then unborn. Amongst the evils brought to the birth

(b) The  
probability  
of error  
on the  
part of  
the Eng-  
lish  
Govern-  
ment in  
gauging  
the public  
opinion  
of a  
remote  
colony.



at this time, and which have since grown to the full development of maturity, was an absentee landlordism; the locking up of land in the hands of a few which might have carried a population a hundredfold larger than its existing occupiers, and which would have doubled its productive power; an unnecessary antagonism between agriculturists and pastoralists; and grossest of all, a highly immoral tendency, which has since had a most pernicious effect both on the private and public life of the people.'<sup>1</sup> When a statesman of the calibre of Lord Grey, who had taken such a lively and intelligent interest in colonial affairs, could impose a statute so pregnant with disastrous consequences upon a distant community, it is apparent that the policy for which he stood was radically unsound.

Undeterred, however, by his ignorance of local opinion and the increasing hostility of the colonists.

Lord Grey's attempt to satisfy the constitutional wants of New South Wales.

he proceeded, in the same fateful year which witnessed the birth of his Land Act, to create a new constitution for New South Wales. He proposed to revive the District Councils for which provision had been made in the Act of

1842. On general grounds the establishment of some such form of local government was eminently desirable.

District Councils again proposed as in 1842.

The proposed municipal bodies might have provided a training ground for legislators, stimulated a public spirit in the different localities, and, above all, counteracted

any tendency towards undue centralization—a tendency which had been strengthened by the

<sup>1</sup> Epps, *Land Systems of Australasia*, p. 23.

nature of the early government of the colony. But all the virtue was taken out of this laudable innovation by some objectionable clauses in the statute. It was proposed that half of the expenses incurred by the maintenance of the colonial constabulary should be defrayed from the proceeds of the assessments on the districts thus created, although their Councils had not the slightest control over that force. Moreover, the Governor was authorized to issue warrants to the Treasurers of the District Councils, requiring them to pay the amount assessed for this purpose, and, in the event of their not doing so, to order the sale of their goods and those of the councillors. Should the sum thus obtained be insufficient, the goods of the inhabitants of the district were to be brought under the same hammer. Such arbitrary and tyrannous provisions naturally excited the liveliest resentment and spelt the death of the new system.

Proposed  
method of  
electing  
the new  
Legisla-  
ture.

Grey, however, apparently thought that its rejection was due to the jealousy of the colonial Legislature. He there-

fore now proposed that its members should be elected by the District councillors, who were elected in the first instance by property owners. Thus it would be deprived of its monopoly by being made dependent upon the Councils to whom it had denied an existence.

Feelings  
evoked in  
New South  
Wales by  
these  
proposals.

His proposals evoked the deepest indignation among the colonists. Not only did they feel that a constitution was being imposed upon them without their knowledge and without their ad-

vice, but it would also have disfranchised some of

those who had enjoyed that privilege for a considerable time. 'When the new constitution comes to us in a legal shape—and our own impression is that it will so come,' wrote the leader-writer in the *Herald*—'the colonists will have nothing to do but to echo and re-echo the watch-word—"To your tents, O Israel." We shall retreat to our homes and leave the constitution to shift for itself. We will hear of no candidate for legislative dishonours; we will listen to no proclamation appointing polling-places for the return of electoral colleges, we shall be as deaf as adders and as dumb as stones. We can be no parties to our own degradation. We must not hold out our hands to be handcuffed nor open our mouths to be gagged.' A great public meeting was convened in the Royal Victoria Theatre. 'It consisted,' according to the *Herald's* report, 'of all classes of society and all varieties of political creed. Landowners, the magistracy, the learned professions, the farmers and graziers, merchants, shopkeepers, mechanics, labourers, and men of every degree were unanimous. Grey's measure was disapproved, despised, condemned, denounced, loathed, abhorred, spurned by that mass of human beings as though the thousands of bodies were animated by one soul.' Many distinguished speakers, of whom the chief was W. C. Wentworth, addressed this gathering. He laid claim, in the name of Englishmen, to the right of the franchise. It was their birthright, and Grey's attempt to deprive them of it was a gross violation of their constitutional privileges. He would have his audience 'tell the minister formally and boldly that they loved their constitutional free-

dom too well not to abhor his measure and that they would have none of it.'

This vigorous expression of colonial resentment was fully appreciated by Governor Fitzroy. He

Lord Grey's failure as a Lycurgus. informed Lord Grey that 'the introduction of the double system of election by making District Councils the constituents of the House of Assembly

would be most unpalatable, and would excite a resistance which would in all probability render it inoperative, and create ill-feeling towards Her Majesty's Government which would not be easily allayed.' 'I am afraid, Sir,' Molesworth drily observed in the House of Commons, 'that the present Secretary of State for the colonies, notwithstanding his very great abilities, will not be renowned in future history as the Solon or Lycurgus of Australia.'

His palpable failure, despite his acknowledged ability and good intentions, only emphasized the fact that any form of government between control from Downing Street and Responsible Government was impossible. Moreover, the emphatic rejection of his proposed constitution by New South Wales not only made it apparent that Representative Government was merely a halting place whereat the colonists collected their forces in order to secure Responsible Government, but the disputes over the Crown lands and the claim of New Brunswick to regulate her own fiscal policy demonstrated that colonial autonomy implied even more than the 'theorists of 1830' realized.

## CHAPTER X

### 'THE COLONIAL POLICY OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S ADMINISTRATION'

#### (b) *The Treatment of the Coloured Inhabitants of the Colonies*

ONE branch of Lord Grey's department was administered with courage, sympathy, and insight.

Treatment  
of the  
coloured  
subjects  
of the  
Crown  
in the  
colonies. His humane interest in the coloured subjects of the Crown evokes our heartiest appreciation. Scattered throughout Her Majesty's dominions in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the West Indies, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and Hongkong, were Redskins, Blacks, Maoris, Kaffirs, Negroes, Caribs, Sinhalese, Tamils, Malays, and Chinese in unnumbered thousands, who, by the seizure of their native lands, were suddenly brought under the sovereignty of the Great White Queen.

The great question was—what was to be done with them? The practice of the past taught no edifying lesson. It could only point to those dark pages which feebly recorded the unimaginable sufferings of the unhappy natives of Africa, Hispaniola, Mexico, and Peru. Unfortunately for them, they were

The prac-  
tice of  
the past.

immolated on the altar of human greed, when, as Lord Morley observes, 'the doctrine of moral obligations towards the lower races had not yet taken its place in Europe.' Fortunately for the

The coloured denizens of the British Empire and the good name of our race, our mother country became the trustee of their fortunes after the European mind had been impregnated with those benign ideas of Rousseau which fostered a profound belief in the worth and dignity of human nature, and promoted the humanitarianism so characteristic of the nineteenth century. The care of the natives was regarded as a solemn responsibility imposed upon the English Government by Providence. 'The present state of Natal and of the black population which has flocked there for our protection,' wrote Lord Grey,<sup>1</sup> 'affords a noble opportunity for the diffusion of Christianity and civilization which it would be a disgrace to this country to neglect.'

In the process of translating modern ideals into practice, such ancient institutions as human slavery had to be abolished, to the serious discomfiture of those for whom they had been economic supports. The quickening of a new and lofty spirit naturally created ardent enthusiasms which were chilled by contact with the existing facts of this material earth, and moved those in authority to the immediate adoption of measures which, in view of the deeply rooted and complex institutions

The effect of the triumph of new ideas upon those largely dependent upon the system the new ideas destroy.

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Policy of Lord J. Russell's Administration*, vol. ii, p. 494.

they proposed to destroy, might have been introduced more cautiously and more moderately, and so averted the serious consequences which actually ensued. 'Few national actions have been more finely conceived or have originated in motives so pure' as the Act of 1834 by which slavery in the British dominions was finally and completely abolished. 'Yet few were more wretchedly executed or had worse practical results.' But if the Imperial Government did

Genuine  
solicitude  
of the  
British  
Govern-  
ment for  
the natives  
in their  
dominions.

blunder occasionally, it continued constant in its adherence to its noble ideals.

Whenever natives were injured throughout the Empire, British representatives were speedily present to apply a soothing balm and prevent a recurrence of the affliction. Such treaties as that concluded at Waitangai in 1842 well demonstrate the humanity, justice, and goodwill of their attitude. Anxious as was England to be rid of the Boers in 1852, they had to give assurances at the Sand River Convention 'that no slavery is or shall be permitted or practised by the farmers of the country nor of the Vaal' before they were granted their independence.

Missionaries were encouraged in their efforts to carry Christianity and civilization to the coloured

The mis-  
sionaries.

people of the dominions by Colonial Secretaries like Lord Grey, and the precepts and example of Colonial Governors like Sir George Grey. There can be little doubt that the zeal of these missionaries sometimes outran their prudence; that their vision was so concentrated on what they conceived to be the rights of the natives that they were sometimes blind to

their excesses and vices; that their anxiety for their welfare led them to denounce authorities who were only acting with necessary decision; that they levelled charges against the Boers which it would occasionally have been impossible to substantiate; and that there were some of them who abused their opportunities to enrich themselves at the expense of their converts. But, unfortunately, it is true that people, who are not themselves models of Christian morality, delight to sneer at the laudable efforts of good men. Certainly the missionaries often had adequate reasons for being afire with indignation at the atrocities of which the whites were guilty, which they rightly reported to the Imperial authorities. Moreover, they were confronted with difficulties of a severe and trying kind. Apart from the study of the native language and the physical discomforts and perils of active service, they had frequently not only to inculcate a religious sense, but to destroy a host of superstitious rites and usages repugnant to Christian morality and common decency. It was no light task to give a warring tribe like the Bantus, who really had no religion, a conception of God as an omnipotent, extra-mundane, invisible power, or to create in them any respect or love for Christ, who must at first have seemed to them an anaemic weakling, who, instead of smashing the skull of His enemy with one blow, actually turned to him the other cheek and invited another buffet. But they persevered and prevailed. 'Posterity will realize the value of the Christian mission-work in Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not only in ethics but in contributions to Science,



more especially to Geography, Ethnology, Zoology, and, above all, the study of African languages.'<sup>1</sup>

Imperial officers like Sir George Grey and Sir Theophilus Shepstone, encouraged by Lord Grey, devoted themselves to a careful study of the language, laws, customs, superstitions, and legends of the aboriginals. 'I soon perceived,' wrote Grey,<sup>2</sup> 'that I could neither successfully govern nor hope to conciliate a numerous and turbulent people with whose language and manners, customs, religion, and modes of thought I was quite unacquainted.' We can imagine him listening intently to an old tattooed Maori telling him the famous legend of Hine Moa, who 'rose up in the water as beautiful as a wild white hawk, and stepped upon the edge of the bath as graceful as the shy white crane.' The sedulous acquisition of such knowledge was an indispensable prerequisite to the establishment of happy relations between the Government and the governed. Many of the bloody incidents which mar the early pages of the history of New Zealand were solely due to the unintentional offences committed by white men ignorant of local customs and local land laws.

Establishment of schools and hospitals. Schools and hospitals were established. At these hospitals, which Lord Grey believed 'contribute to the improvement of an uncivilized race,' the natives received gratuitous treatment. The effec-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Harry Johnston, *The Opening up of Africa*, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Henderson's *Life of Sir George Grey*.

tual practice of medicine reinforced the missionaries' assaults on the natives' faith in magic and charms. At the Grey Hospital at King Williamstown a Kaffir woman's eyesight was restored. 'I was blind, O Mother, O Queen,' she wrote to Her Majesty, 'but now I see perfectly and I see everything. I can see the stars and the moon and the sun. I used to be led before, but now, Mother, O Queen, I am able to walk myself.' The blacks were profoundly impressed, the reputation of the new methods of healing was considerably enhanced, but the old tribal 'doctors' still retained their practices.

In the schools the industrial side of the work was emphasized. 'I attach the greatest importance,' wrote Lord Grey,<sup>1</sup> 'to the principle of making these schools of an industrial character.' The natives were to be stimulated and taught how to work. Instructors in carpentry and agriculture were appointed. The Maoris were encouraged to plant wheat, barley, oats, and potatoes that they might win a sustenance by cultivating the land rather than develop the bad habit of searching for a white speculator who might buy it from them.

The economic aspect of the Government's native policy was of the first importance. In all the colonies labour was essential, and, with the exception of Australia and Canada, that of the coloured people was freely employed. The construction of the necessary roads, bridges,

<sup>1</sup> Grey, *Colonial Policy of Lord J. Russell's Administration*, vol. ii, p. 507.

Lord Grey's emphasis upon the industrial side of the school work.

The economic aspect of Lord Grey's native policy.

wharves, and public buildings in New Zealand was appreciably hastened by the paid labour of the Maoris. In Jamaica and other West Indian

The labour problem. Islands, the labour problem was the most urgent and the most difficult which confronted the planter. The emanci-

pated slaves, being able to satisfy their simple wants by the superficial cultivation of their own allotments, were disinclined to render any further service to their former masters. At first they accepted moderate wages, but, becoming sensible of their worth, they demanded an increase, which, when granted, only diminished their exertions since what they required for their comfort remained constant. Consequently, as the cost of labour increased, its quantity diminished, and the planters were threatened with ruin. Lord Grey set himself with characteristic energy to solve the problem. He thought 'that it was a

Lord Grey's insistence that the natives must work. great and unfortunate error, when slavery was abolished, not to place the emancipated population under regulations calculated to impose upon them the necessity of greater exertion, and,

at the same time, to provide for various objects necessary for their real welfare, but the importance of which it was not likely that they would be able to understand.'<sup>1</sup> As it was, a race had been freed but a society had not been formed. Liberty had been given to a heterogeneous mass of individuals who could only comprehend licence. A participation in the rights, privileges, and duties of civilized society had been granted to them; they were only capable of enjoying its vices. He

<sup>1</sup> Lord Grey, *Colonial Policy*, vol. i, p. 377.

would have them understand that the abolition of slavery did not relieve them from the obligation to work. There was a tendency for them to slip into loose and idle habits, detrimental alike to their own advancement in civilization and morality and to the best interests of the colonies. Their animal instincts prompted them to gratify their immediate physical needs, but they remained uneducated, irreligious, and medically uncared for. He proposed, therefore, to impose a tax upon their provision grounds, which was to be strictly enforced, while vagrancy was to be severely punished. The money obtained by such direct taxation was to be devoted to the maintenance of the police, the roads, schools, places of worship, and hospitals, by which they, the taxpayers, were to benefit.

The supply of labour was further increased by Coolie immigration. As it was probable that their scanty needs and the facility with which a subsistence could be obtained in those fertile islands would make them averse to steady industry, and as it was essential that they should be stimulated to exert themselves, her Majesty's Government brought down certain concrete proposals calculated to achieve that object. 'An ordinance founded on these principles was passed in Mauritius and has worked exceedingly well.'<sup>1</sup>

A tax of 7s. per hut was imposed upon the natives of Natal in order to obtain the revenue necessary for the expenses of Government. As individuals possessed little or no property upon which a tax could be levied, since the land, crops, and cattle were regarded as the common property of the tribe,

Taxes  
imposed  
on the  
natives.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Grey, *Colonial Policy*, vol. i, p. 75.

this taxation took the form of tribute, payable in money, labour, or kind, from the tribe, rather than a levy upon individuals. Whatever was collected in this manner was expended locally, thus making the burden less objectionable to the natives while the Government was relieved of considerable expense. In order to facilitate the collection of these taxes, it was deemed advisable to place the natives in definite locations. Their affairs were to be administered and their taxes collected by their chieftain, were he approved for that position by the representative of the Imperial Government. We here come to a supremely important consideration, which goes to the root of the native problem.

The question was whether it was wiser to preserve the authority of the chiefs and influence their tribes through them, or whether their power might safely be shattered immediately and replaced by that of the Crown. Lord Grey consistently advocated the former policy. He fore-

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saw that, while the active intervention of the British Government would terminate the tyranny and injustice of the chiefs, it would simultaneously destroy their prestige and deprive them of the means of maintaining their social position. Not only would they be discontented, but upon the British Government would be placed the responsibility of assuming the authoritative position in the tribe which they once occupied. 'This is a task,' he wrote, 'which the British Government possesses no adequate means of efficiently performing, and I consider therefore that it is the wiser policy,

Lord  
Grey's  
policy.

instead of destroying whatever social organization has hitherto existed among the savage tribes now brought under our control, to endeavour to maintain as much as possible, correcting the abuses and supplying the defects of the system.' 'The real interest of this country,' he wrote in another connexion,<sup>1</sup> 'is gradually to train the inhabitants of this part of Africa in the arts of civilization and government, until they shall grow into a nation capable of protecting themselves and of managing their own affairs so that the interference and assistance of the British authorities may by degrees be less and less required.' When it was necessary, in the interests of justice and humanity, to deprive a tyrannous chieftain of some of his power and prevent him obtaining a revenue in his usual way, he might be mollified by being appointed an executive officer charged with the maintenance of the law, although forbidden to inflict punishment, the administration of the native villages, and the levying of tributes, and paid a salary sufficient to support a style of life equal to that to which he was accustomed. A British Resident, with full powers of interference, was always to be in attendance, but the natives were to be governed in accordance with their own usages unless they were clearly impossible.

Illustrations of the wisdom of his advice in this connexion.

Experience has testified to the wisdom of this policy. In Basutoland, the Switzerland of South Africa, the natives, shielded by the British Government from the rough pressure of the Boers, have been left to advance in their own way

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Policy*, vol. ii, p. 287.

under their own chiefs, subject to the vigilant supervision of Imperial officers. No attempt has been made to interfere with their moral, social, or political principles. Time, peace, and the missionaries are trusted to bring about their gradual civilization. In New Zealand Sir George Grey pursued the alternative policy. He shattered the authority of the chiefs and replaced it by his own. The influence of the old moral ideas and the old customs over the native mind was weakened. Those petty disorders incidental to the tribal life, which had once been remedied by the chieftain and were too small to come under the notice of the white Governor, remained unhealed—a constant irritation. Sir George Grey's personal magnetism was tremendous, his influence over the Maoris was far-reaching and salutary, and yet, even during his own Governorship, the murmurs of the storm which burst in 1861 were audible. That unhappy event threw into high relief the cardinal defect of his native policy, which might be traced to his neglect of Lord Grey's instructions, concurrence with which has produced such encouraging results in Basutoland.

As was natural, in view of the pugnacious characteristics of the Zulus and the Maoris, the native tribes did not acquiesce without resistance in the occupation of their countries by the white race. But they were taught that behind British clemency and British justice there was such power and determination that their resistance was futile. Once they appealed to force the policy of Lord Grey and Sir George Grey was to attack them with decision and reduce them to uncon-

rey's  
method of  
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natives.

ditional surrender. Lord Grey never believed in half measures. When Lord Torrington was criticized in the House of Commons for suppressing a rising in Ceylon with exemplary vigour, he warmly defended his action, affirming his belief in rapid and decisive action, accompanied by severe punishment and succeeded by conciliatory measures. Natives are not to be won by a handshake. They must first be imbued with a lively respect for the prowess and power of their overlord, which must usually be engendered by a few sternly contested engagements, and then treated with clemency and consideration that their respect for the strength of their conqueror may deepen into an attachment as the result of his thoughtful advancement of their interests.

Reviewing the conditions of the coloured population of the British Empire we must conclude that England's (Lord Grey's) native policy just and humane. they have benefited by the protection of the British flag. It is true that many of them have contracted vices unknown in their former state, but they are attributable to the weaknesses of the mean whites, certainly not to any delinquency on the part of the Imperial Government. As we have already observed, we can regard this aspect of England's colonial policy during the past century with unmixed satisfaction. It demonstrates again the far-reaching influence of humane ideas once they are accepted by potent authorities; its success has provided the other nations recently brought into contact with the coloured races of the dark Continent with a lesson which, when they heeded it, has been profitable to them, and which, had it been studied by



Germany, would have saved her reputation from being tarnished in South-West and Western Africa ; it created traditions which the Governments of such self-governing colonies as, in logical sequence, took over the control of the native races within their confines when they became autonomous, have worthily tried to emulate ; and it proves conclusively the deep and intelligent interest which Lord Grey took in colonial affairs and his earnest desire to act to the advantage of the colonists.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTONOMY

DISCOMFORTED by the resentment which his well-meant efforts had evoked in New South Wales and South Africa, Lord Grey had finally referred the problems their demands created to two Select Committees of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations, and invited them to suggest solutions. Despite the clarion tones in which the colonists had couched their demand for Responsible Government and nothing less, the able and liberal-minded members of these Committees offered them everything but that.

The Constitution which they drew up for Cape Colony contained provisions of the most democratic kind.<sup>1</sup> They admitted that a Second Chamber should be less easily swayed by the popular feeling of the moment than the Assembly, and that, by checking hasty legislation, it should diminish the necessity for the interference of the Governor or the Crown. But they rightly insisted that this body should command public confidence and be sensitive to

<sup>1</sup> Included in Grey's *Colonial Policy*, vol. ii, pp. 441-68.

the influence of public opinion. They therefore advised the creation of an elective Upper Chamber, consisting of ten members elected by the whole Colony for ten years, of whom the five who polled the smallest number of votes at the initial election were to retire at the end of the first five years, although eligible for re-election. Thenceforth half the body would seek re-election every five years. As the normal life of the Lower House was of five years' duration this arrangement meant that the electors would be called upon ordinarily to choose the members for their district and five councillors for the Upper House at the same time. In the event of a constitutional deadlock the Governor was empowered to dissolve both Houses simultaneously. Moreover, any members who failed to attend at least half the meetings of this Council were to resign. 'Her Majesty,' wrote Lord Grey, 'has been graciously pleased freely to concede to the inhabitants of the Cape Representative Government in its most complete form, granting to them the right, which is not at present enjoyed by any other British colony, of electing, not only the members of the House of Assembly, but those also of the second branch of the Legislature who are everywhere else nominated by the Crown.' The New South Wales Legislature was empowered to amend its own constitution and to levy customs duties, subject to certain provisos, on British goods—two powers reserved by Lord Durham to the Imperial Legislature.

And yet, despite these substantial concessions, neither New South Wales nor Cape Colony were satisfied. To them much had been given, as

much was given to Ireland prior to 1914, but from them, as from Ireland, what they cherished above aught else had been withheld. The sovereignty of the British Crown was too manifest; the Governor was still invested with too much actual power; the Crown lands were still under his control; Responsible Government with all its implications had yet to be won. Their whole case was stated again in clear and incisive language in the declaration and remonstrance drawn up under the leadership of W. C. Wentworth against the Act of 1850, which embodied the Committee's recommendations.

Our territorial revenue is in a great measure confined to the introduction among us of people unsuited to our wants, and in many instances the outpourings of the poor-houses and unions of the United Kingdom, instead of being applied in directing to this Colony a stream of vigorous and efficient labour calculated to elevate the character of our industrial population. The bestowal of office amongst us, with but partial exception, is still exercised by or at the nomination of the Colonial Minister, and without any reference to the just claims of the colonists, as if the colony itself were but the fief of that minister. The salaries of the officers of the Customs, and all other departments of Government included in the schedules, are placed beyond our control; . . . all the material powers exercised for centuries by the House of Commons are still withheld from us; our loyalty, and desire for the maintenance of order and good government, are so far distrusted

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Petition  
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that we are not permitted to vote our own Civil List, lest it might prove inadequate to the requirements of the Public Service; our waste lands and our territorial revenue, for which Her Majesty is but a trustee, instead of being spontaneously surrendered, as the equivalent for such Civil List, is still reserved, to the great detriment of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, in order to swell the patronage and power of the ministers of the Crown; whilst, in defiance of the Declaratory Act (1778), which has hitherto been considered the Magna Charta of the representative rights of all the British plantations, a large amount of our public revenue is thus levied and appropriated by the authority of Parliament; we have not even the consolation of seeing that portion of it which is applied to the payment of the salaries of our public officers distributed, as it ought to be, among the settled inhabitants; and, as a fit climax to this system of misrule, we are not allowed to exercise the most ordinary legislation which is not subject to the veto of the Colonial Minister."<sup>1</sup>

The new Council, elected under the Act of 1850 endorsed the remonstrance and added to it the following offer. 'In order that your Majesty's confidential advisers may have no excuse for the continuance of these abuses, we unhesitatingly declare that we are prepared, upon the surrender to the Colonial Legislature of the entire management of all our revenues, territorial as well as general, and upon the establishment of a Constitution among us similar in its outline to that of Canada, to assume and provide for the whole

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A, Grey's *Colonial Policy*, vol. ii, p. 367.

cost of our internal Government, whether civil or military, and to grant to your Majesty an adequate civil list.'

Lord Grey immediately replied to this strongly worded manifesto. He doubted whether it accurately expressed the feeling of the community, believing that those who had signed it voiced the opinion of the most noisy and easily excited of the population rather than the real convictions of the majority or of the most intelligent. Moreover, he was inclined to think that the inhabitants of New South Wales were apt to be led away by unsound but plausible arguments when their vanity was appealed to. Still, he could not disguise his disappointment at the reception accorded a measure which had only been drawn up after mature deliberation by a Special Committee. He plainly informed the remonstrants that he regarded the waste lands, and the revenue derived therefrom, as held by the Crown as the trustee for the inhabitants of the Empire at large, and that no Colonial Legislature could claim control over them as a right, nor was it expedient to allow them such authority. He expressed his surprise and regret that the Council should have made such imputations as to the character and fitness of the immigrants who had been selected by a Board which had discharged its duties in a manner highly advantageous to the colony and creditable to itself. In answer to their argument that the schedules of expenditure fixed by the Imperial Government were a violation of the Declaratory Act, he made a remarkable reply, which was surely the expression of a

Lord  
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debater's point rather than a deliberate official statement. 'It is important to observe,' he wrote,<sup>1</sup> 'that the Act of George III neither declares, nor was intended to declare, anything beyond the renunciation by Parliament of any right to interfere with chartered Provincial Legislatures. The Constitution of New South Wales is itself created by Act of Parliament, . . . and Parliament in creating such a constitution had an unquestionable right to annex to the grant such conditions as it might think expedient.' This is simply a veiled reassertion of an Imperial claim which, when it found expression in a Parliamentary Act, had provoked the bitterest resentment in the American colonies. He refused, moreover, to recognize the claim of the inhabitants of New South Wales to any monopoly of a right to official appointments, since it would exclude others of Her Majesty's subjects from the opportunity of receiving them. Finally, while objecting to plenary legislative powers for the Council, he suggested the division of the subjects of legislation into local and imperial, to the former of which the Governor might give his assent without referring to the Crown, while, on the latter, the local Legislature should have no power at all.

The Council's reply to his dispatch. The Council considered his dispatch and replied without abating one jot or tittle of their former claim. They asserted<sup>2</sup> 'that the British Constitution, so far as it is applicable to our circumstances, is the inalienable birthright of the people of these colonies. One of the most important rights which that

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Policy*, vol. ii, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Accounts and Papers*, 1852, lxiii, 26-7.

Constitution confers on our fellow subjects at home is the enjoyment of the plenary and immediate power of legislation which is here contended for.' The vetoing power, they reminded the minister, was one of the prominent grievances set forth in the celebrated Declaration of Independence. 'We should enjoy the same power of self-government,' they continued, 'which is possessed by our fellow countrymen at home. To be contented with anything less would be alike derogatory to ourselves and unjust to our children. It would be to bequeath to them a smaller measure of freedom than our fathers transmitted to us.'

Fortunately this spirited answer fell into the hands of a new and more sympathetic Secretary of State for the Colonies. In a dispatch to Governor Fitzroy he admitted the urgent necessity of granting self-government to a people who had given such signal evidence of their ability to manage their own affairs. He was prepared to exempt them from the Crown's power to veto on local subjects if they could distinguish local from imperial concerns. Moreover, he was willing to transfer the administration of the Crown lands to the Colonial Legislature. Finally, he advised the colonists to avail themselves of the power granted them by the Act of 1850 and draft a Constitution embodying his own ideas. He concluded his dispatch with the hope that the contemplated changes would 'not only tend to promote the welfare and prosperity of the great colony, but also to cement and perpetuate the ties of kindred, affection, and mutual confidence which connect its people with those of the United Kingdom.'

Sir John  
Paking-  
ton's  
friendly  
and  
liberal  
reply.



With this liberal and friendly dispatch the struggle between the colonies and the mother

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colonies.

country over the principle of Responsible Government practically ceased.

Lord Durham's proposal notwithstanding, the Australian colonies drew up

their own Constitution and submitted

it for the approval of the Imperial

Parliament. With some slight modifica-

tions it became law in 1855. One of the provi-

The Aus-  
tralian  
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sions of this Act might well be quoted,

since it marks the happy termination

of a long and lively controversy. 'The

entire management and control of the waste lands

The ques-  
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lands  
settled as  
the prin-  
ciple of  
autonomy  
dictated.

belonging to the Crown in the colony

of New South Wales, and also the

appropriation of the gross proceeds

of the sales of any such lands; and of

all other proceeds and revenues of the

same from whatever source arising,

including all royalties, mines and

minerals, shall be vested in the Legislature of the

Colony.'<sup>1</sup> Under the circumstances such gene-

rosity was inevitable if peace were to prevail, yet

it was magnificent. If we look back now over

the record of our connexion with Great Britain,

reminding ourselves of the size of this Continent,

of the story of its early days, of the mere handful

who now inhabit it, of the liberties and privileges

they enjoy, we must gratefully acknowledge that

she has done well by us.

Never again did the Imperial Parliament withhold the full measure of self-government from any

<sup>1</sup> Act of 1855 Clause LVIII, included in Cramp, *State and Federal Constitution*.

colony fitted to exercise it. Queensland received the boon in 1859; Cape Colony was obliged to wait until 1872, owing to difficulties created by the Kaffir wars and the necessary presence of British troops; Western Australia and Natal, the two most backward of the colonies, entered into their inheritance in 1890 and 1893, respectively; and, in 1906, the Transvaal and Orange Free State were entrusted with the control of their own affairs four years after they had unconditionally accepted the terms imposed upon them by a victorious and magnanimous nation, which thus proved to the world that the priceless principle of autonomy had become an axiom in her Colonial policy.

There can be no clearer proof of the autonomy of the colonies than their fiscal arrangements, but they too were only won after much argument and bestowed with much regret and misgiving. Amongst the proposals made by the Committee in 1850, which was incorporated in the Australian Constitution Act of that year, was one by which the Governor and Legislative Council of the colony were enabled to impose such duties as they thought fit<sup>1</sup> 'on the importation into the colony of any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, whether the produce or manufacture of or imported from the United Kingdom, or any of the colonies or dependencies of the United Kingdom, or any foreign country,' but forbade them to impose differential duties.

<sup>1</sup> Act of 1850 Clause XXVII, included in Cramp, *State and Federal Constitution*.

When this liberty was allowed the colonists it was universally believed at home that they would adopt Free Trade, merely imposing such revenue duties as their local needs dictated. It was inconceivable that they would subject British goods to a protective tariff. 'Of the fiscal policy of the different portions of your own Empire,' Charles Buller assured the House,<sup>1</sup>

"you can always make sure, and may rely upon being met by no hostile tariffs on their part." He thought it possible that

other nations, either through caprice or in accordance with political views totally independent of economic theories, might cherish their restrictive policies. But his ideal was Free Trade within the Empire. 'Then, if the game of restriction is to be played,' he declared, 'they might show the world that no country can play it with such effect and such impunity as Great Britain, which, from the outlying portions of her mighty Empire, can command the riches of every zone, and every soil, and every sea that the earth contains: and can draw, with unstinted measure, the means of every luxury and the material of every manufacture that the combined extent of other realms can supply.'<sup>1</sup>

But his ideal has not been realized. Events took a contrary course. In 1859 the Governor of Canada forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies a reserved Bill whose provisions clearly indicated the intention of the Canadian Government to adopt Protection. The Secretary

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield, *Art of Colonization*, p. 472.

of State replied that, while he would probably assent to the Bill, he could not but express his regret that the 'experience of England, which has fully proved the injurious effect of the protective system and the advantage of low duties upon manufactures both as regards trade and revenue, should be lost sight of, and that such an Act as the present should have passed.'<sup>1</sup>

The dispatch of the Secretary of State.

His dispatch evoked a spirited reply from the Minister of Finance in the Canadian Government.

He asserted that while the Canadian Legislature always desired to satisfy the Imperial Parliament that its policy was neither hastily nor unwisely formed,

The Canadian Minister's spirited reply.

and that a due regard was displayed for Imperial interests, 'the Government of Canada acting for its Legislature and people cannot, through those feelings of deference which they owe to the Imperial authorities, in any manner waive or diminish the right of the people of Canada to decide for themselves both as to the mode and extent to which taxation shall be imposed. . . . Self-government would be utterly annihilated if the views of the Imperial Government were to be preferred to those of the people of Canada.'<sup>2</sup> Although very dubious as to the wisdom of the proposed step, and very regretful that the fiscal policy of the mother country should be departed from by the eldest of her colonies, the Secretary of State finally advised that the Royal assent should be given to the measure.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, vol. iii, p. 1160.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1161-2.

When in 1870 the Australian colonies desired a modification of the Act of 1850 in order to allow of inter-colonial Free Trade the Imperial Government again yielded with the utmost reluctance. They pointed out to the colonial authorities that such differential duties would be inconsistent with the principles of Free Trade which were alone permanently conducive to commercial prosperity ; that they would promote those commercial jealousies which were one of the most fertile causes of international disputes, and that they would do far more to weaken the connexion between the mother country and her colonies than any expressions of opinion in favour of a severance.

The Colonial Government replied that they asked for nothing more than had been accorded to Canada by the Imperial Parliament since 1850, and they referred to the Reciprocity Treaty with America in 1854. Moreover, they pointed out that ' Great Britain must logically do one of two things—either leave the colonies unfettered discretion ; or, if she is to regulate tariffs or reciprocal tariff arrangements, or to make treaties affecting the colonies, give to the colonies representation in matters affecting the Empire.'<sup>1</sup> To attempt to regulate matters under the existing circumstances was to interfere in vital colonial interests without the requisite knowledge of their wants and requirements.

The Imperial Government was unwilling to

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, vol. iii, p. 1174.

impair the cordial friendship then prevailing between the mother country and the colonies, and was fearful that opposition to Free Trade would become identified in the colonial mind with the defence of the rights of self-government. They fully recognized that 'no attempt' could 'be more hopeless than to induce free self-governed states to adopt exactly the same opinions on . . . Free Trade and Protection which the people of England happen to entertain at that precise moment,' and were aware that the colonists were 'naturally impatient of being treated as persons who' could 'not be entrusted to regulate their own affairs at their own discretion.'<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, in 1873, they acquiesced in the request of the Australian colonies, subject to the proviso that 'no new duty shall be imposed upon and no existing duty shall be remitted as to the importation into any of the Australian colonies of any article, the produce or manufacture of any particular country, which shall not be equally imposed upon or remitted as to the importation into such colony of the like article the produce or manufacture of any other country.'<sup>2</sup> The effect of this clause was to prevent preferential trade between England and the Australian colonies, but it was removed in 1895.

By 1873, then, the commercial policy of the Empire was completely disintegrated. The policy of Free Trade, so dominant in England, was definitely rejected by her colonies. The granting

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, p. 1179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1181.

The  
Imperial  
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tantly.

of self-government had entirely destroyed her hitherto unquestioned claim to regulate the fiscal policy of the whole Empire. Her colonies had the power to impose protective duties even more hostile to British interests than to those of any foreign power. Veteran members of the old school like the aged Earl Grey were keenly disappointed to find that not only foreign nations but even the self-governing colonies within the Empire itself refused to accept the doctrines of 1846. It seemed to them that the full freedom of the colonies was incompatible with their allegiance to the mother country, and they questioned whether the English people would accept the responsibility of protecting them if they were to exercise no real authority over them.

Time, however, has proved that such dismal forebodings were unwarranted. The self-governing Dominions, on their own initiative, have given a preference, which revised tariffs only increase, to British manufactures. It might perhaps have been possible to have accompanied the grant of Responsible Government with an Imperial tariff calculated to consolidate the Empire, but the opportunity passed away. The winning of complete autonomy and the total abolition of the old colonial system has solved many difficult problems and cleared the ground. It is now possible for the mother country and the independent States within her Empire to meet on an equal footing, and, attracted to one another by a sense of common interests, a community of

The commercial policy of the Empire disintegrated. The colonies favour Protection, the mother country Free Trade.

The fear that autonomy would lead to antagonism proved groundless.

blood, language, and institutions, and their loyalty to the same Sovereign, arrange a system of preferential trade in the terms of which each has had a voice and to the observance of which each is pledged.

The history of Britain's colonial policy, as we view it, is the history of the growth of an idea. A retrospect and reflections. implanted in the minds of a few Radical British statesmen and colonial reformers by a correct understanding of the secret of England's constitutional development, fostered by colonial grievances and the intelligent sympathy of a few Imperialists, but retarded by official indifference, a natural love of authority, and misunderstanding. Visibly nourished by the adoption in England of a new fiscal policy whose underlying ideas were identical with those from which it drew its inspiration, it matured at last, after slight setbacks, to find expression in an official recognition of the fact that, in any dependency whose people are capable of self-government, ministers ought to be responsible to the representative Assembly. There is no *via media*. Either a colony must be governed by its own people or the mother country. 'Only the extreme type prospers.'

To recognize that a benevolent despotism is a right and proper form of government only for those entirely unversed in and unfit for self-government is to manifest a desire to foster diversity, to encourage personality, to abolish tyranny, and to admit, with becoming humility, that the sum total of that glorious inheritance which we call civilization merely represents the



confluence of many contributory streams. On the other hand, to oppress subjects in the name of a higher civilization as England did the Irish, as the Russians have the Finns, as the Magyars do the Croatsians, as the Prussians do their Poles, reveals a lack of sympathy and imagination, an ignorance of the strength of moral forces, and the habit of appealing to mere brute force.

While the Germans, in the name of a higher civilization, have tried to deprive the Poles of their lands and even of their language, Great Britain in her wisdom has left to her French and Dutch subjects the use of their own laws, their own language, their own customs, and their own territory. While Bismarck, in order to Germanize the Poles and so strengthen his beloved Prussia, persecuted them even to the extent of dispossessing them of their property and their tongue, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, taught by the experience of his country, and particularly by the persistence with which the French retained their nationality in Canada—a fact which would have surprised Durham—and inspired by the divine spirit of Liberty, neither attempted to anglicize the Dutch subjects of the Crown nor to exact the slightest tribute from them, but, respecting their beliefs, their feelings, and their customs, gave to them in reality all the liberties they had enjoyed prior to the war, together with the inestimable gift of political institutions.

One hundred and forty years have passed since Frederic 'the Great' took his infamous part in the first partition of Poland; fourteen years ago England was fighting with the Boers. Since the swords were sheathed two different policies have

been pursued. To-day we read of defection in the Polish regiments of the Prussian hosts, while in South Africa compulsory military service has been introduced that the Dutch and English forces, under the leadership of the victor of Colenso, might inflict a crushing defeat on England's German enemies in that part of the world.

Autonomy reduced Great Britain's political control over the largest of her colonies, but it has removed all the friction that once existed. It has replaced the loss of power by a great increase of loyalty, and has been an inestimable boon to her self-governing dominions. It is fitting that the principle underlying it should first have been enunciated by 'Radical Jack,' as Lord Durham was popularly called, and last applied, with all its logical developments during the last half of last century, to conquered States by a great Liberal statesman.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRIVILEGE

‘No community, which is not primarily charged with the ordinary business of its own defence, is really, or can be, in the full sense of the word, a free community. The privileges of freedom and the burdens of freedom are absolutely associated together; and to bear the burdens is as necessary as to enjoy the privileges, in order to form that character which is the first security of freedom itself.’<sup>1</sup> When the present self-governing dominions first obtained the privilege for which they had agitated so vigorously, they displayed a marked reluctance to undertake its correlative responsibilities. Since their inception, the British Government had controlled the native races in their various States, and borne the cost of their military and naval defence. But once autonomy was granted, it was perceived that it was incompatible with that principle for the mother country to try to govern a distinct section of an autonomous community, or to allow the movements of soldiers paid by her to be controlled by its Executive. Local wars were colonial concerns, and it was as indefensible for the colonials to ask British taxpayers to

The responsibilities of privilege—the self-governing colonies to provide for their local defence and control the natives within their confines.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone, quoted in Adderley's *Colonial Policy*, p. 53.

liquidate the cost of colonial undertakings as it was for the Imperial Parliament to ask the colonists to contribute towards the expense of their domestic politics. The British Government therefore concomitantly withdrew their soldiers from the self-governing colonies, or left them there if the colonists paid for them, and entrusted to them the supreme control of the native races within their confines.

The total cost of colonial defence in 1846 amounted to £4,000,000 per year. This huge bill

England's  
bill for  
colonial  
defence. was partly the result of the 'insane desire for worthless Empire' which led the British Government 'to thrust an

officer with a few soldiers into every nook of our colonial universe,' and 'in every hole and corner,' to 'erect a fortification, build a barrack, or cram a storehouse full of perishable stores.'<sup>1</sup> Imposing as the spectacle of a widely flung Empire defended at every turn by soldiers and all the appurtenances of war might be to a superficial observer, it was a hollow sham to an acute critic. The 'prestige of might' argument was aptly described as the 'sham lion fallacy.' Such a dispersion of strength only gave an enemy the opportunity to destroy its adversary piece-meal. It was estimated that, when the self-governing colonies were made responsible for their local defence and the other portions of the Empire were defended as true strategy and naval requirements ordained, the expenditure on colonial defence would be reduced by at least a half.

From a commercial point of view the outlay

<sup>1</sup> Molesworth, *Speeches*, p. 247.

was a bad bargain for Great Britain. Colonies were worth defending, it has been argued, because they provided markets for the manufactured articles of the mother country and supplied her factories with raw materials. But statistics proved that independent colonies were more useful than dependent ones. In 1844 England exported to the United States £8,000,000 worth of produce and manufactured goods, an amount equal to the whole of her export trade to the colonies, which she defended at a cost of £4,000,000 per annum, while her consular service in America only cost £15,000 per annum.

Furthermore, it was felt that such colonies as New South Wales had so advanced in wealth and population, and were so lightly taxed as compared with those of Her Majesty's subjects who remained at home, that they might reasonably be asked to share with them the common burden of Imperial defence. It was simply preposterous that the inhabitants of one small island, who counted amongst their number hundreds of thousands of the poorest in Europe, should be taxed for the maintenance of soldiers for the protection of other members of the Empire far richer than they in material things. Such colonists were plainly informed by Lord Grey that they could rest assured of a fair share of Imperial protection, but their local defence must be their own concern. He was quite prepared to allow the British regiments to remain if they paid for them, otherwise they would gradually be withdrawn, and their barracks

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each paid.

and other buildings would be rented to the colonial authorities if they so desired.

It was hoped, too, that when the colonists had themselves to defray the cost, colonial wars would be less frequent. In the past, it was maintained, they took advantage of England's generosity. Since they profited by the lavish expenditure of money within the colonies on the necessities of war, gained territory at the expense of the natives with little cost to themselves, and could witness the punishment of their coloured enemies with little personal discomfiture, they encouraged rather than avoided trouble. This, it was contended, was especially true of Cape Colony. The Governor, Sir Henry Pottinger, was unable to give 'an adequate idea of the confusion, unauthorized expense, and (as he believed) attendant speculation which had obtained.'<sup>1</sup> It was felt that the Kaffir wars were not inevitable, and, when they did ensue, the blundering, the protracted operations, the ignorance of the theatres of battle, and the dishonesty of officials, multiplied the cost exceedingly. 'The loss of one axe and two goats on the frontier of the Cape of Good Hope,' said Sir William Molesworth,<sup>2</sup> 'has cost this country a couple of million sterling.'

Moreover, the colonists were numerically strong enough to protect themselves. The New Englanders, when 'God stirred their hearts,' summoned their local militia and exterminated the Pequot nation which had been molesting them. From time to time they vigorously took the

<sup>1</sup> Molesworth, *Speeches*, p. 166. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

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offensive on their own initiative and at their own expense against their troublesome neighbours. They were not accustomed to look to England for assistance. Such self-reliance, such sturdy action, were admirable national traits. The colonists of the Second Empire were disposed to remain infants, glad to flourish under maternal protection. They, as well as England, would benefit by being charged with the responsibilities of their privileges.

In 1862 the House of Commons resolved, without a division, that 'Colonies exercising the rights of self-government ought to undertake the main responsibility of providing for their own internal order and security, and ought to assist in their own external defence.' This principle, Adderley writes, was distinctly asserted by every succeeding Secretary of State of either side of politics.<sup>1</sup>

The new policy excited the utmost alarm in South Africa and New Zealand, whose inhabitants felt unequal to the task of defending themselves against their aboriginal neighbours. Their objections to the unwelcome responsibility thrust upon them, demonstrate, in an interesting and convincing manner, the inseparable connexion between Responsible Government, local defence, and the control of native affairs.

The Cape Colonists, much as they desired to be autonomous, preferred to be dependent rather than lose the British troops, whose presence was necessary to protect them

<sup>1</sup> Adderley, *Colonial Policy*, p. 381.

during the native wars, provoked, they asserted, by the meddlesome interference of the missionaries in South Africa and the philanthropists of Exeter Hall who had the ear of the Imperial Government. When it was finally pressed upon them in 1872, they were assured that one British regiment would be left for some unstipulated time in the Colony. Owing to untoward events which subsequently supervened, their number was augmented rather than diminished until it attained its maximum in 1902.

In New Zealand the local and Imperial authorities differed as to which Government should (b) New Zealand. control native affairs. The Imperial Parliament and the veteran Pro-Consul Grey agreed that they should be the concern of the New Zealand Government, who were unwilling to accept that responsibility since they would be deprived of the assistance of the British troops. They claimed the right to direct military operations, and to decide the fate of such prisoners as were captured during the war, but they delegated to the Governor the absolute control of the native race, although no separate fund was placed at his disposal that he might take any action he saw fit with regard to them. To the Imperial Parliament they presented the bill for the cost of the war. Such an arrangement was obviously impossible. 'If the doctrines now propounded by your ministers,' wrote Mr. Cardwell, 'are to be admitted, New Zealand must be regarded, not only as owning no dependence upon the mother country, and as having that inherent right which independent countries exercise of conducting their own affairs, . . . but as having this right coupled



with the singular privilege of having a Governor, a General, and an army furnished by this country. On the other hand the mother country would simply be a tributary nation, affording at its own cost the means of carrying into effect the policy of the Colonial Ministers without exercising any voice in the direction of that policy.' The obvious solution emanated from the New Zealand Premier when he proposed that the Imperial troops should be withdrawn altogether, and that the Colonial Government should become responsible for native affairs. The Imperial Government were quite willing to act upon his suggestion, but the moment was not opportune. It was not until some years later that the troops were entirely withdrawn.

The control of the native races within their confines was thus entrusted to the self-governing Dominions, who have been animated, in their dealings with them, by the best traditions of the mother country. Every provision has been made for their material comfort and intellectual advancement. In South Africa and New Zealand they have been given a voice in the management of their own concerns. The latter country has furnished the world with the curious and unexpected spectacle of the leaders of the two political parties in the Dominion angling for the vote of the Maori member who had the power to determine which of them might form the Government.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE GENERAL ATTITUDE OF ENGLISH STATESMEN TOWARDS THE COLONIES 1815-1881.

It is interesting at this stage, when we are on the threshold of a new epoch in the Colonial policy of Great Britain, to arrest our study of the evolution of the principle of Responsible Government, and examine more closely the general attitude of English statesmen towards the whole question of Empire during the period we have traversed.

The attitude of English statesmen towards the colonies, 1815-1881.

Such a survey reveals several features which bear a marked resemblance to those which characterize England's Colonial policy during the reigns of Elizabeth and the first two Stuarts. The lonely pioneering work of great patriots like Sir Stamford Raffles and Rajah Brooke, only noticed by the Imperial Government when it interfered to discourage their enterprises, the literary advocacy of the cause of colonization by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the settlement of New Zealand by a private Company whose plan of colonization had been

Comparison between England's colonial policy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the nineteenth.

rejected by a Ministry whose chief had declared that New Zealand must be regarded as an independent country, and the settlement of stalwart members of the High Church party in England and the Free Church of Scotland in Canterbury and Otago respectively, remind us immediately of the noble work of Gilbert and of Raleigh, of Richard Hakluyt, of Thomas Smith and the London Company, of William Bradford and John Winthrop. We miss, it is true, the high exaltation and ardent enthusiasm which pervade Hakluyt's immortal pages. Men were not spellbound by the great mystery of a New World in the West; colonists did not hope to find Eldorados of fabulous wealth, or emigrate with the express intention of carrying the gospel and civilization to benighted heathens; the two religious bodies were not forced to leave the United Kingdom for conscience' sake. Yet the two stories are alike in this—they make manifest the deplorable indifference or disastrous interference of the Imperial Government. We are indeed almost forced to the conclusion that the British Empire is what it is in spite of the British Government.

From 1815 until 1880 the leading statesmen of the great political parties in England, with the exception of Huskisson, Sir Robert Peel, Lord John Russell, and Lord Grey, regarded the Empire as a transient trust of a particularly onerous kind.

The Liberal Party, between 1830 and 1850, counted amongst its number Imperial idealists like Durham and Buller, who were a stimulus and an inspiration, but the general attitude of Radicals, Liberals, and Conservatives was one of

Dull  
pessimism  
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dull pessimism, or, at best, cheerful resignation to an inevitable and not altogether unwelcome development.

Mr. Gladstone has frequently been accused of deliberately endeavouring to get rid of the colonies, but this charge cannot be substantiated. He rejoiced, in 1846, that he lived in a period 'when so blessed a change in our Colonial policy was brought about'<sup>1</sup> as that which the

The attitude of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal Party.

adoption of the principle of autonomy inaugurated. He believed with passionate conviction in local freedom, and incessantly protested against the practice of regarding the colonies as communities of people unused to political power who were to be prepared for the exercise of what were their hereditary rights. He had no patience with those who withheld Responsible Government from them lest the authority of England might be reduced. 'Now I confess,' he wrote, 'that the nominated Council and the independent Executive were not shields of authority, but sources of weakness, disorder, disunion, and disloyalty.'<sup>2</sup> 'If you want to see British law held in respect and British institutions adopted and beloved in the Colonies,' he declared on another occasion,<sup>2</sup> 'never associate with them the hated name of force and coercion exercised by us, at a distance, over their rising fortunes. Govern them upon a principle of freedom. Defend them against aggression from without. Regulate their foreign relations.'

Indeed, it was the policy he so ardently advocated which saved the colonies to the Empire.

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, vol. i, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman boasted in 1906 that 'the Colonial Empire has been built up by the principles of the Liberal party; if it had not been for the application of that principle it would have gone to pieces years ago.' And yet, in 1872, Disraeli, professing an attachment to the spirit of democratic Imperialism which he had repudiated twenty years earlier, asserted<sup>1</sup> that there had been 'no effort so continuous, so subtle, supported by so much energy, and carried on with so much ability and acumen, as the attempt of Liberalism to effect the disintegration of the Empire.' How are we to reconcile these two conflicting statements?

They have this feature in common, both speakers would seem to impute to the Liberal party an intention of which it was never conscious. It is true that the Empire owes its salvation to the timely application of the truly liberal principle of Responsible Government, but it is equally true that no one, either in England or the colonies, credited Mr. Gladstone's party with a burning desire to preserve its integrity. At the same time they made no continuous, subtle effort to bring about its disintegration, although self-government was not conceded as part of a greater policy of Imperial consolidation. In short, Mr. Gladstone, as Lord Morley observes,<sup>2</sup> 'regarded our Colonial connexion as one of duty rather than as one of advantage.' It is sometimes maintained that he always believed that autonomy would lead to co-operation and not to disintegration, but whatever his real feelings were the colonists

<sup>1</sup> At the Crystal Palace, June 24, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i, p. 359.

gained the impression that the Liberal party, indifferent to their sentiments and aspirations, granted them virtual independence in the hope that they would shift for themselves.

Disraeli, with his customary ability, performed a neat volte-face. <sup>The opinions of Disraeli.</sup> "Those wretched colonies," he exclaimed in 1852, 'will all be independent in a few years, and they are a millstone around our necks.'

Twenty years later we find him educating his party up to Imperial conceptions and bemoaning the lamentable indifference in the past when nothing had been done to consolidate the Empire. When power fell into his hands he did nothing to promote Imperial unity, but, with his penetrating discernment, he had accurately divined the tendency of the times. A change was at hand, as he forecasted.

But let us not anticipate nor ignore the influence of another important body of opinion during this period. <sup>The attitude of the Manchester School.</sup> The Manchester School, indifferent as to the fate of the colonies, regarded their ultimate independence as inevitable, and were steadily opposed to Imperial expansion. Cobden denounced 'the blood-stained fetish of Empire'; and Bright, in a manner which reminds one of the convincing methods of argument adopted by Mr. Angell, showed the English wage-earners what the wars, which the expansion of the Empire involved, meant for them.

<sup>Reasons for these opinions.</sup> This pessimism as to the future of the Empire, this passive acquiescence in measures which it was believed smoothed the way for the final rupture, this

steady hostility to Imperial expansion, was the outcome of beliefs and theories, which, for the best part of a century, dominated the official mind of England.

It is idle to criticize statesmen for not possessing the capacity to see the effect of contemporary legislation in a hundred years' time.

(a) The belief that the break-up of Empires was a fatal necessity. Never before in history had another country succeeded in retaining permanently a colonial empire. The methods of colonial government in the past had only been attended by failure. Indeed, many believed the ultimate disintegration of empires a fatal necessity. When the wisdom of her colonial policy prior to 1840 was disproved by the logic of events, England adopted the device of giving to her dependencies the right to manage their own affairs. As they grew in stature and demanded enlarged privileges and assumed greater responsibilities, it seemed as if their goal was independence. If that were so, the mother country could only be thankful that she had parted with her grown-up children on good terms. Prescient philosophic statesmen with a knowledge of the colonial temper, like Wakefield, predicted that Responsible Government would be a chain forged by Liberty to connect the fragments of an Empire inseparably together; but theirs was a still small voice in the English political world.

The adoption of Free Trade by England ensured to the colonies, as we have noticed, the concession of certain commercial privileges which were incidental to complete self-government, albeit it destroyed the old system of trade pre-

ferences which might have become the basis of an organic union. But, in the opinion of the

(b) The adoption of Free Trade withdrew the material advantages the possession of colonies conferred.

Manchester School, with the abolition of the commercial advantages hitherto enjoyed by English manufacturers in colonial markets the sole justification for retaining the colonies disappeared. 'The maintenance of this monopoly,' wrote Adam Smith,<sup>1</sup> 'has hitherto been the principal, or more properly, perhaps,

the sole end and purpose of the dominion which Great Britain assumes over her colonies. In the exclusive trade, it is supposed, consists the great advantage of provinces which have never yet afforded either revenue or military force for the support of the civil government, or the defence of the mother country. The monopoly . . . is the sole fruit which has hitherto been gathered from that dependency. Whatever expense Great Britain has hitherto laid out in maintaining this dependency [the American Colonies] has really been laid out in order to support this monopoly.' When this monopoly was abolished 'not only those who still adhered to the opinion that the former policy with respect to colonial commerce was the right one, but many of the most eager advocates of the principle of Free Trade concurred in arguing that, if the colonies were no longer to be regarded as valuable on account of the commercial advantages to be derived from their possession, the country had no interest in keeping these dependencies and that it would be better to abandon them; thus getting rid of the heavy charge on the country, especially in providing the requisite

<sup>1</sup> *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. IV, Chap. vii, Part 3.



amount of naval and military force for their protection.' <sup>1</sup>

Lord Grey very rightly insisted that the nation had acquired responsibilities in the course of centuries which she could not repudiate, and had been accorded the great privilege of diffusing the blessings of Christianity and civilization amongst millions of the human race. Moreover, the possession of colonies in various parts of the world not only added to her dignity and stature as a sovereign power, but also to her potential strength. 'Nor ought it to be forgotten,' he wrote admirably, 'that the power of a nation does not depend merely on the amount of physical force it can command, but rests in no small degree on opinion and moral influence.' But these views commanded little respect in that commercial age. From a purely commercial point of view the Empire was a bad bargain. The colonial trade, said Cobden, was only worth £10,000,000 per year, and to ensure that Britain spent £5,000,000 on colonial administration, whereas, were they independent, she could still trade with them—for the Free Traders of the day assumed that the whole world would adopt their fiscal theories—and only have to meet the cost of her consular service. 'The colonial system,' he said, 'with all its dazzling appeals to the passion of the people, can never be got rid of except by the indirect process of Free Trade, which will gradually and imperceptibly loose the bonds which unite our colonies to us by a mistaken notion of self-interest.'

And, finally, the anti-Imperialists had an in-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Grey, *Colonial Policy*, vol. i, p. 10.

instinctive horror of predatory Imperialism. To them the spectacle of a powerful nation using its might to deprive other people of their land was most repugnant. Morally indefensible, it was economically unjustifiable. 'Fresh acquisitions of territory,' declared John Bright, 'add to the burdens of the people of Great Britain and Ireland. We take the burden and we pay the charge. This policy may lend a seeming glory to the Crown, and may give scope for patronage and promotion and pay pensions to a limited and favoured class, but to you, the people, it brings expenditure of blood and treasure, increased debts and taxes, and added risks of war in every quarter of the globe.' They were not only convinced that peace was essential to commercial prosperity, but were equally convinced of the futility of war.

There is much to be said for their point of view. 'Bigness is not necessarily greatness; if by remaining in the second rank of magnitude we can hold the first rank morally and intellectually, let us sacrifice mere material magnitude.'<sup>1</sup> It was indeed fortunate for England that the Palmerstonian policy, which was making her as detested throughout Europe as was France in the reign of Louis XIV, was abandoned. The expenditure of the blood and the treasure of the nation in arrogant and gratuitous interference in European disputes, and the forcible annexation of the lands of other people to gratify the lust for power or the greed for gold, were both wicked and mischievous. Nevertheless, it was highly inadvisable to be indifferent as to the future of vast territories

<sup>1</sup> Seeley, *Expansion of England*, p. 19.

already possessed whose people might render very good service in times of stress—as the Dominions are doing at the present time. Moreover, provision had to be made for the commercial and naval requirements of a country devoted mainly to industrial pursuits, and dependent upon the supremacy of her navy for the essentials of life. And, finally, the responsibilities and prestige of a paramount power sometimes require interventions otherwise wholly unjustifiable.

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE BRITISH IN SOUTH AFRICA

I. 1836-1881

WHILE England's attitude towards the colonies was determined by these ideas, her representatives, sometimes in obedience to express commands from home, sometimes in obedience to the immediate demands of the local situation, were muddling along in South Africa. As we have observed, the Boers, exasperated by the actions of an ignorant and irresponsible Colonial Office, withdrew, at great personal sacrifice, from the area subject to its rule, and won for themselves by valour and indomitable resolution pasturage for their flocks and herds in the expansive veldts beyond the Orange River.

But they were not alone in their protest against the régime of 'Mr. Mother Country.' Canada and Australia also emphatically requested that he should cease to meddle with their affairs. Fortunately for the Empire, as we have noticed, they were left to work out their own salvation. South Africa alone of the present self-governing Dominions was ruled, in fact as well as in name, by the Imperial Government during the period we have now surveyed. In view of the professed opinions of the governing classes in England during that time, we might expect that their policy in South Africa would be spiritless and indifferent. But

it was more and less than that. It was aggressive and pusillanimous, decided and uncertain, possibly justifiable on the grounds of expediency, certainly incumbent upon a nation with a lively moral consciousness.

It is not a story which affords a member of the Empire any gratification. It is a tissue of blunders. One event is the forerunner of the next, until, in 1881, we find a powerful Government led by the greatest Englishman of his age defending itself against the taunts of a shame-smitten people, and the Boers faithfully transmitting to their children their grim legacy of hate.

The courage, the dogged determination, and the fervent love of liberty which always characterized

The character of the English from the point of view of the Boers. the Dutch excite our admiration while their misfortunes enlist our sympathies. It is not difficult to understand their feelings towards the English, who seemed to pursue them with relentless pertinacity. By an arrangement unknown

to them, they had been brought within the jurisdiction of a foreign power whose rule they learned to detest. Repudiating its sovereignty, they had withdrawn from its territory, and, after enduring frightful privations, established themselves beyond the Orange River and between the Quathamba Range and the sea, winning the lands they occupied from the savage impis of Moselekatze and Dingaan, who were displaced because, like their predecessors, they were unequal in

Their malicious rapacity. military skill to the new-comers. After their settlement had been overrun by the Zulus, the few British traders at Durban had ceded whatever rights they possessed

to the Dutch, who thus felt that they had an unquestionable right to these hardly won territories. But they reckoned without the English Government who collected that part of the fruits of their sacrifices and victories represented by Natal, forcing those of them already settled therein to go beneath the yoke or depart again into the wilderness. The high plateau between the Orange River and the Transvaal was left to them, until it suited the convenience of the British Government to take possession of it.

Honest and plain-spoken men themselves, they hated the unreliability and duplicity which they came to associate with the English name. At the Sand River Convention in 1852 England had guaranteed their independence; in 1877 she had taken it away. They had been promised by Sir Theophilus Shepstone that 'the Transvaal would remain a separate Government with its own laws and Legislature'; they were compelled to submit to the dictation of a stupid, arrogant, and autocratic Administrator, whose swarthy countenance would seem to indicate the presence of Kaffir blood in his veins, who not only wrung taxes from them at the point of the bayonet but even seized their beloved ox-wagons.

Not only did the British Government thus wilfully violate its solemn promises when convenient, but they never hesitated to use any instrument which would help them to attain their ends. Under the pretence of carrying the Gospel to the natives, David Livingstone, their emissary, as the Boers believed, worked his way along their western frontier and

Their  
duplicity.

Their un-  
scrupulous-  
ness.

gained an influence over the tribes about and beyond the Zambezi, thus hemming them in on the west and the north. To prevent their expansion into Natal, Moshesh was recognized by Great Britain as the ruler of the independent state of Basutoland, and, when the same crafty Government feared that they might secure a port on the sea-coast, they had expelled them from Natal. In short England, which posed before Europe as the Christian protector of oppressed peoples, was prepared to use any implements, however defiled, to gratify her ambition and her greed.

Her professed solicitude for the Kaffirs, they insisted, was hypocritical—a cloak for her nefarious designs. To save them from them-  
 Their hypocrisy. selves she extended her frontiers in Kaffraria; to rescue them from the sjambok and rifle of the Dutch farmer Sir Harry Smith annexed the Orange Free State; to ensure their security from violation by the rough miners at the newly discovered diamond mines at Kimberley, the Government of Natal had wrongly decided that the field belonged to Waterboer, who had already offered it to the British Government; in order to still the rising ambition of Cetewayo and reduce Siku-Kuni to submission Sir Theophilus Shepstone proclaimed the sovereignty of Great Britain over the Transvaal.

Furthermore the unutterable Kaffirs, whom they regarded as servants provided for them by the Lord, were preferred before them.  
 Their preference for the Kaffirs. ‘Are we then worse,’ wrote Pretorius, ‘are we more contemptible than the coloured population? To them are acknowledged

and secured the lands they have inherited; to them are allowed the privileges of self-government and their own laws; but, as soon as we whites are on the same lands, which we have justly obtained from them, these privileges are immediately taken from us, so that we may justly say that we do not even share equally with the coloured tribes; but that now, though all other creatures enjoy rights and liberties, we are constantly constrained to be in fetters. We will rather await the merciful settlement of the great Creator than longer to wrestle under the feet of every petty, coloured people.'

England's consistent vacillation, however, afforded them some consolation, albeit it increased their contempt for that nation. The boundaries of eastern Cape Colony had been extended and contracted, the Orange Free State had been seized and abandoned, the Transvaal was annexed and retroceded. Boomplatz and Majuba seemed to be the only effective arguments to address to a power whose will was unequal to its ambitions.

Obstinate, old-fashioned, and intractable, the Boers thus came to regard England as their evil genius. Changeable, culpable as her policy was at times, however, it was certainly not so deliberately wicked and abandoned as it appeared to their prejudiced and embittered minds. Truly the reassertion of her authority over Natal is morally indefensible, however expedient it may have been. Since she ignored the petitions of her colonists at D'Urban and neglected to take advantage of the opportunity

Their vacillation.

The English point of view.

The occupation of Natal expedient.



afforded her of securing a firm grasp of the country, it was patently unjust to resurrect her claims after they had been ceded by her subjects to those who had cleared the land of the savages and made it habitable. To attempt to justify wanton aggression on the ground that the power thus obtained is considered essential to world power, is to hold a brief for the doctrine that he should take who has the power and he should hold who can.

But we must repudiate with equal decision the charge that England has been the Arch-hypocrite, who, on the pretence of carrying the Absolute sincerity. Gospel to the heathen or ameliorating their social and economic conditions, has unscrupulously advanced her selfish interests. Whatever mistakes Colonial Secretaries may have made, they were absolutely sincere in their solicitude for the blacks and immovable in their determination to abolish human slavery. On the express condition that they would respect the rights of the natives the Transvaal Boers had received their independence in 1852, and they could scarcely expect England to honour that contract if they themselves broke it by violating its chief provision. It is true that the ideal for which the British Government stood was distinctly modern, and, as such, foreign to the Dutch farmers of South Africa. But, if they suffered thereby, it was the penalty exacted from them for losing touch with the modern world.

The responsibilities of a first-class power.

Moreover, England could not evade the responsibilities of her status as a great power. She was unquestionably paramount in South Africa, and was therefore obliged to ensure its peace by removing

or suppressing the disturbing elements. The most fertile cause of the native unrest was undoubtedly the warlike activity of the Boers. Cetewayo, chieftain of the Zulus, Khama, king of the far-off Bamangwato, even Lobengula, the ruler of the distant Matabile, complained of their aggression and wrong-doing. These pugnacious tribes were neither able nor inclined to distinguish between the nationality of their white enemies; their one desire was to wash their spears in the blood of white men. Consequently the Dutch farmers not only incurred their hostility for themselves, when they burned their kraals, but also placed the lives of the other Europeans in South Africa in jeopardy. When this fearful menace was enhanced by such a victory as Siku-Kuni won in 1876, by which the prestige of the whites was sensibly diminished, it was obviously imperative that some action should be taken by the paramount power in the interests of all the white colonists.

Furthermore England has never turned, and as a great power could never turn, a deaf ear to appeals from distressed subjects in other parts of the world. Indeed it is our proud boast that 'Civis sum Britannicus' is a password which commands the respect of all the nations of the globe. She was therefore compelled, however reluctantly, and the degree of that reluctance is apparent in Lord Grey's pages, to assist those of her subjects whom she had herself placed in close proximity to the Kaffirs, when their very existence was imperilled by their onslaughts. For the same reason, when those of her subjects who were working at the Lydenburg

gold-fields begged for relief from the anarchic conditions which prevailed in the Transvaal Republic owing to the incompetence of the Dutch Government, Her Majesty's ministers justifiably directed the attention of the President and Volksraad to their remonstrances with a courteous reminder of their obligations. Had they not done so they would have been recreant to their trust.

It is true that England's representatives proclaimed the sovereignty of the Crown over the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, and that their actions were officially endorsed by Lord Grey and Lord Carnarvon respectively, but, to avoid misapprehension, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that they were given to understand by their advisers on the spot that the *Pax Britannica* would be welcome to, and welcomed by, the great majority of the inhabitants of each Republic. It was chiefly because he was informed by Sir Bartle Frere that the Boers were reconciled to the annexation of 1877 that Mr. Gladstone, on his accession to office in 1880, refused to revoke Shepstone's proclamation, despite his pre-election criticism that in the Transvaal 'we have chosen most unwisely, I am tempted to say insanely, to place ourselves in the strange predicament of the free subjects of a monarchy going to coerce the free subjects of a Republic, and to compel them to accept a citizenship which they decline and refuse; but if that is to be done, it must be done by force.'<sup>1</sup> He declared that he would repudiate the new possession because it

Belief of  
English  
statesmen  
that *Pax  
Britannica*  
was desired  
by Boers.

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, vol. iii, p. 27.

was obtained by means dishonourable to the character of the country.

When Lord Grey and Mr. Gladstone realized that they had been grossly misinformed, that the majority of the residents were hostile to the rule of England, they abandoned the sovereignty of the Orange Free State and retroceded the Transvaal, despite considerable opposition at home and in Cape Colony. It was obviously impossible for a nation, the traditional champion of Liberty, to bludgeon into submission another people wishing to be free.

Had England so desired she could have smothered Kruger and his commandoes in their own blood. But the triumph of a first-class power over a body of farmers in a struggle undertaken to gratify a passing lust for revenge, and in which such a victory was a foregone conclusion, would not only have been in itself a sufficient humiliation, but also a poor compensation for those widowed mothers and fatherless children who would have mourned the loss such a petty triumph would have involved. Unfortunately the Boers, curiously ignorant of England's might, mistook magnanimity for cowardice—an accusation which a nation conscious of its strength can always afford to despise.

Moreover, it is easy now to question the wisdom of the events of the past. But they can only be understood if we project ourselves back in imagination to the epoch in which they were transacted. If we look at things as they were in 1850 it must be confessed that the Imperial Government's decision of 1852 was perfectly

South  
Africa  
as it  
appeared  
to Lord  
Grey and  
Mr.  
Gladstone.

natural. At the expense of the British taxpayer the flag was simply following a restless and irrepressible foe over a vast expanse of arid country. 'Very serious dangers,' wrote a Select Committee of the Privy Council at the time, 'are inseparable from the recent, and still more from any future, extension of Her Majesty's Dominions in South Africa. That policy has enlarged, and, if pursued further, may indefinitely enlarge, the demand upon the revenue and the military forces of the kingdom with a view to objects of no perceptible national importance. By these repeated extensions, your Majesty's colonial subjects have as repeatedly been brought into contact with new tribes of barbarous people with whom it has been found impossible either to obtain any protracted peace, or to wage any war which has not been at once costly, inglorious, unprofitable, and sanguinary. The effect of such an extension of territory has not been to arrest the emigration of the disaffected colonists, but to induce them to emigrate into yet more distant regions, into which they have carried a warfare revolting to humanity and disgraceful to the British name.'

It may be regretted that the wise advice of Sir Garnet Wolseley which he tendered the Imperial authorities in 1879 was not heeded. 'The Transvaal,' he wrote,<sup>1</sup> 'is rich in minerals; gold has already been found in quantities, and there can be little doubt that larger and still more valuable gold-fields will sooner or later be discovered. Any such discovery would soon bring a large British population here. The time must eventually arrive when the Boers will be in a small

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Gladstone*, vol. ii, p. 266.

minority, as the country is very sparsely peopled, and would it not therefore be a very near-sighted policy to recede now from the position we have taken up here, simply because for some years to come, the retention of 2,000 or 3,000 troops may be necessary?' He therefore urged the Imperial Government to inform Kruger, as he bluntly did, that the Vaal River would flow backwards over the Drakensburg Mountains before the British troops would be withdrawn. But, as far as Mr. Gladstone could then foresee, the Transvaal was valueless, and, even had it been as valuable as it was valueless, he would not have retained the sovereignty over it. Apart from the other cogent reasons which moved him, he had also recognized that any attempt to avenge Majuba would probably have caused the Boers of the Orange Free State and Cape Colony to enlist on behalf of their truculent kinsmen. They would have then been permanently alienated from Great Britain, and the Federation, which Sir George Grey and Lord Carnarvon had regarded as the only solution of the South African problem, would have become impossible.

The great defect of England's policy in South Africa prior to 1881 was its lack of continuity.

Criticism  
of Eng-  
land's  
policy in  
South  
Africa  
(1836-  
1881). She ought either to have placed her claims as a paramount power in South Africa beyond dispute, or to have withdrawn entirely to Capetown and Simon's Bay. To declare her sovereignty over the Orange Free State, and then, after giving it a new Constitution and winning the attachment of the great majority of its people, to pay £48,000 to be rid of it, was blatant idiocy.

To promise a people who cherished their liberty above aught else virtual self-government, and then to withhold it in order to facilitate a federation—to which autonomy is never necessarily antagonistic—was a gross violation of a pledge which it is idle to attempt to defend. To recall a Governor of the calibre of Sir George Grey because his suggestions were unpalatable to a Ministry whose ideas on Colonial government were both dull and scanty was unwise, although his lordly indifference to such Imperial instructions as did not coincide with his own views merited rebuke. But, if the English Government lacked faith, the Boers wanted the spirit of sweet reasonableness. The struggle between them was really a conflict between a people who had not advanced beyond the seventeenth century and a Government imbued with the ideals of the nineteenth. Kruger hated the English, the English wished to have nothing to do with Kruger, but ‘never do counsels of mortal men thwart the ordered purpose of Zeus.’

# CHAPTER XV

## THE BRITISH IN SOUTH AFRICA

II. 1881-1915

HOWEVER defensible, in view of existing conditions, the retrocession of the Transvaal may have been, the average Englishman felt that England had been humiliated. The national pride was silently but deeply stirred. The time was ripe for the advent of the advocates of expansion.

The policy of expansion and aggression.

The demon of jealousy was also beginning to agitate the body politic. France, Germany, and other countries suddenly became possessed of the lust of empire and entered vigorously into the scramble for new lands. unoccupied by European or recognized non-European powers. Even America, moved by the prevailing spirit, suddenly found herself 'sitting like a startled hen upon a brood of unnumbered islands in the Pacific.' But Africa promised the richest rewards to the land-hungry nations. Their emissaries soon made their presence felt. England had for so long enjoyed the rare privilege of being free to help herself to whatsoever she desired, although for several reasons she had been exceedingly temperate, even ascetic, that she was disturbed to mark the entrance of determined competitors into the field. But prospects of strife and contention awakened again the old instincts

The scramble for new lands.



of pugnacity and self-assertion which had for long been torpid, and the nation, determined to have voice in the partition of the Dark Continent, braced itself with a thrill of joy to meet its new rivals.

Furthermore, colonial pressure accelerated the new tendencies. The Australian colonists in particular, accustomed to rejoice in their Antipodean security and to regard the Southern Pacific as British waters, were greatly alarmed when the German flag was planted in New Guinea and that of France in the New Hebrides. They accordingly at once petitioned the Imperial Government to take such action as would safeguard their interests.

Colonial interests had for long only concerned the Imperial Government when they forced themselves upon its attention, and then had received short shrift and speedy dismissal. Such indifference and neglect was an unintentional boon to the colonies, but, with the growth in population and material wealth, came the desire for some association with the mother country, some common Imperial policy, some recognition by England of the fact that she had become the centre of an Empire whose self-governing members had interests to be studied and upheld, and who were anxious to enter into the friendliest and closest relations with her. The Government of the United Kingdom, in its turn, came to appreciate their value, to understand their claims, and to apprehend that the Empire is one whole.

The influence of the Manchester School was no longer potent, the principles of laissez-faire were

qualified by the yearning for union, and the self-governing colonies, having developed into young nations, were welcomed into the ranks by the senior nation: England participated in the partition of Africa; she again became embroiled in trouble with the Boers, whom she vanquished and then invested with complete self-government; and she

Decline of the influence of the Manchester School. has formally adopted the policy of inviting responsible ministers from the oversea Dominions to meet the members of His Majesty's Government at regular intervals at round-table Conferences, to discuss, with perfect freedom and on the basis of equality, those problems which are peculiar to so unique an Empire, and to devise the bonds which will unite the component parts of the Empire indissolubly together. The nature of her colonial policy during the last thirty-five years has been determined by her desire to attain these various objectives.

By 1880 English traders, missionaries, and explorers had gained some influence in various parts

The English in South Africa (1880-1910). of the Dark Continent. When they became conscious of the threatened German intrusion, they redoubled their efforts to persuade their Government to interfere. The Imperial authorities,

however, were not disposed to place on the British taxpayer the immediate cost which such expansion and development would involve, and fell back upon the Chartered Company, which had done such excellent work in laying the foundations of our first Colonial Empire.

This regeneration of the Chartered Company is one of the most interesting features in the history

of British colonization in the nineteenth century.

The re-  
generation  
of the  
Chartered  
Company.

The Indian Mutiny had sounded the death-knell of the ancient and famous East India Company; ten years later the Hudson's Bay Company, after a life of two hundred years, had surrendered its charter. But now, when it seemed to have run its course, the Chartered Company was revived.

Success in such undertakings as were now mooted demanded freedom from governmental interference and pioneers with the love of adventure, plenty of initiative, the courage to take risks with the prospect of undisturbed possession of the fruits of the venture, substantial financial resources, and such political experience as is given by the practice of free institutions. These pre-eminently British qualities were especially characteristic of the Chartered Company, and to that potent colonizing instrument the Imperial Government now instinctively turned.

But there was one important clause in the new charter which was absent from the old. As

An  
important  
restriction.

the chief objection to them in the past had been that they secured a trading monopoly from which evil consequences flowed, it was now specially enacted that 'nothing in this charter shall be deemed to authorize, set up or grant any monopoly of trade.' Subject to that proviso and the vigilance of the modern press, always on the alert for questionable practices, the Chartered Companies of South Africa were free to fulfil their mission.

Members of the Empire are greatly indebted to those great Empire-builders—Sir George Goldie, Sir William Mackinnon, and Cecil Rhodes, the

guiding spirits of the Royal Niger Company, the  
Three  
Empire-  
builders. British East Africa Company, and the  
British South Africa Company respec-  
tively. As a result of their profound  
faith in England's Imperial mission, their enter-  
prise, their business acumen, and their conspicuous  
ability, the Union Jack now floats over an area  
about the River Niger thrice that of the British  
Isles, over extensive territories in Central Africa  
extending from Mombasa to Fashoda, and over  
possessions between the Limpopo and Zambezi  
rivers almost equal in extent to the combined area  
of Great Britain, France, Russia, Austria, and  
Spain.

Like their predecessors, of which the famous  
London Company was perhaps the most notable  
in this respect, these Companies did not  
Their  
tremendous  
difficulties. at first prove profitable to shareholders.  
In Nigeria, Sir George Goldie had to  
struggle desperately against the competition and  
political influence of France and Germany; in  
East Africa, Sir William Mackinnon was con-  
fronted by wild tribes, savage kings, unscrupulous  
Arab slave-dealers, and contentious representatives  
of Christianity; in Rhodesia, the Company was  
obliged to suppress a formidable Matabele rising,  
to protect their frontier against hostile Boers,  
and to wage war upon the rinderpest and red-  
water, which decimated their flocks with frightful  
rapidity. Despite such formidable difficulties  
they have persevered, Rhodesia owing not a little  
to Mr. Rhodes's bottomless money-bags and reso-  
lute will.

They have opened the way to the rich regions  
of Central Africa, which have been, and must con-

tinue to be in an increasing degree, of the utmost value to commercial England. Railways and telegraph-lines have been built, the natural resources have been developed, a constant and conscientious effort has been made to eradicate the inhumane practices of the blacks, to save them from the white man's vices, to protect the weak from the strong and tyrannous, and to lift them to a higher plane of life. And, finally, colonization has been promoted in Rhodesia, which is a fit home for Europeans, rich in minerals, eminently suited for pastoral and agricultural industries, and, as yet, sparsely populated.

'It is said that our Empire is already large enough and does not need expansion. We shall have to consider not what we want now, but what we want in the future.' Those who sympathize with the aspirations implied in these words will regard with hearty approval the magnificent work of the regenerated Chartered Companies. 'As skirmishers in front of the main body of organized British possessions, let trading companies go on and do their work, to be absorbed hereafter in the fullness of time.'<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the enterprise and industry of these Chartered Companies, the political responsibilities of the United Kingdom were greatly increased. By 1890 she undoubtedly possessed the greatest interest of any power in South Africa, and was recognized as paramount there by the nations of Europe. The Boers of the independent

Added responsibilities of the mother country.

<sup>1</sup> Sir C. Lucas, Introduction to G. C. Lewis's *On the Government of Dependencies*, p. 23.

Republics, especially those in the Transvaal, continued to live as they saw fit, each doing what was right in his own eyes. The presence of the British in Bechuanaland and Rhodesia was for them an unpleasant spectacle, but they cherished their liberties undisturbed until the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. That discovery marks the beginning of a series of events in which Mr. Paul Kruger, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and Lord Milner figure conspicuously, which terminated in the wild bloodstorm that swept away once again the independence of the two Boer Republics. The causes of that war must be sought in the colonial history of South Africa. The negotiations prior to its outbreak were conducted by the Secretary for the Colonies, the whole Empire participated in it, and the peace which finally prevailed was solely due to the courageous application by a Liberal Government of the fundamental principle to be deduced from the history of Great Britain's relations with her colonies.

When the world learnt that gold was exceedingly plentiful on the Rand, there was an immediate

<p>The discovery of gold on the Rand. The inrush of people.</p>	<p>inrush of people into the hitherto unchallenged preserve of the Dutch farmers and pastoralists. The contrast between the two aspects of life which were now juxtaposed was indeed marked.</p>
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The stolid, sober, solitary, country-loving Boer, as suspicious of new-comers as he was of new ideas, suddenly found his country invaded by miners, engineers, traders, artisans, company promoters, and merchants, all jostling each other in pursuit of the golden wealth which he despised.

A city of dimensions foreign to his experience rose with incredible rapidity, and it required, for the safety and good health of its inhabitants, laws and conveniences which the Boers were neither willing nor able to supply. Between these pastoralists, who preferred to spend their lives in the saddle and cared naught for industrial, commercial, or financial undertakings, and the quick-witted, enterprising, feverish Uitlanders, who could not even speak their taal, there was little affinity or social intercourse.

Paul Kruger, the dominant power in the Transvaal, hated the foreigners and their ways. He was prepared to profit by their presence, but was determined that they should have no voice in the government of the country. The franchise was restricted more and more, until, in 1890, an immigrant was barred from obtaining it unless he was under forty years of age and had resided at least twelve years in the country after taking the oath of allegiance.

Had the Government been efficient, the newcomers would probably have been prepared to acquiesce for the time in the existing constitutional arrangements. But the Government was hopelessly inept. 'In some of the elements of modern civilization the Transvaal Boers had gone back rather than forward.' A strong constabulary, a sufficient water-supply, an adequate sanitary system and legislation restricting the sale of liquor to the natives, were urgently needed. Moreover, food was dear owing to the Customs duties imposed

The rapid growth of Johannesburg.

Attitude of Paul Kruger towards the Uitlanders.

Ineptitude of the Transvaal Government.

by the President and his Council; Dutch was the only recognized official language and the medium of instruction in the schools; and the Uitlanders were often forced to join commandoes against the Kaffirs.

The capitalists interested in the works were exasperated to find the industry hampered by the maladministration of the Government. One favoured individual had a monopoly of the supply of dynamite, the rates for the carriage of gold were excessive, the tariff on machinery increased the working expenses, the high price of food raised the cost of feeding the natives in the compounds, and the unregulated sales of liquors impaired their capacity for work and endangered their lives.

In 1892 a National Union was formed 'to obtain by all constitutional means, equal rights for all citizens of the Republic, and the redress of all grievances.' They did not aim at the subversion of the independence of the Republic in favour of England. There was no intention originally of extending the territories of Great Britain. All they aimed at was internal reform by constitutional means. It was purely a Johannesburg movement.

The shrewd, crafty, dogged, and courageous President viewed the movement with inveterate hostility. He was the visible embodiment of the virtues and defects of the Boers of the old type. To him and to them the Transvaal was the land which they had won for themselves from beast, black, and English, that they might cherish their own ideals and live their own lives in peaceful independence. The



new-comers had only come to gather gold. Once it petered out they would as suddenly disappear. They were not rooted in the soil. Their lives, their property, their religion, their freedom were assured. Were they to be given some share in the government, they would not be satisfied until they obtained a voice proportional to their numerical strength, which would mean, he feared, that the customs and independence of the Boers would be jeopardized. He therefore turned a deaf ear to their complaints. This was most unwise. Had he reformed the administration, made the Government efficient and up to date, reduced the border tariffs, and allowed the use of English in the schools, he would have detached the capitalists from the discontented party and considerably weakened the National Union.

Still there were signs that the reforming party was bound to triumph ultimately. Kruger was advanced in years; a despotic and incompetent Government cannot live for long, a party of increasing influence in the Volksraad favoured substantial reforms, and the Orange Free State and Cape Colony were prejudiced against the President because he imported Hollanders for the administrative posts created as the result of the growth of the Republic instead of availing himself of the capable men in the adjoining colonies. Had the ardent Reformers been content to wait a little longer their objects would have doubtless been in a large measure realized. But discontent was rampant, and there was open talk of insurrection when a crisis was precipitated by the ill-starred Jameson Raid.

Ultimate  
triumph  
of the  
Reformers  
assured.

Apparently an understanding had been arrived at between some of the influential Reformers at Johannesburg and Dr. Jameson of British Bechuanaland, by which he was to make a sudden dash on that city, co-operate with the disaffected party, destroy the existing Government, and plant the Union Jack in the Transvaal. However, their plans went awry. Jameson's raid was immediately repudiated by the British Government and he was captured by a Boer force. It was a most regrettable episode, and was productive of the most deplorable consequences. The old racial hatred which had been dying away in the Cape and the Free State was revived. The movement for reform in the Transvaal was regarded as a deliberate conspiracy to overthrow the Dutch Government and establish the British rule. The inveterate hostility and distrust entertained by the old Boers towards England was intensified. The National Union was destroyed, its leaders were imprisoned, the progressive party in the Volksraad was silenced, and the influence of the President was immensely strengthened. Moreover, the Afrikaner sentiment was aroused, and the Dutch throughout South Africa, animated by a common love for their independence, drew closer to their threatened if churlish kinsmen.

Had Kruger now been magnanimous all might have been well. But he persisted in maintaining his indefensible attitude. Some compromise was absolutely essential. It was impossible for the Transvaal Government to continue unchanged. Some concessions to the Uitlanders were imperative. However, he

The  
Jameson  
Raid.

Unyielding  
obstinacy  
of Kruger.

seemed to be able to conceive of no remedy but force, and immediately began to import arms and ammunition for the struggle which he regarded as inevitable. He had a profound faith in the protection which Providence had hitherto accorded his people, a curiously inadequate conception of the strength of his enemies, and an overweening confidence in the military prowess of his commandoes.

In 1897 a measure was passed giving to the resolutions of the Volksraad the force of law, and forbidding the courts to question their validity. Laws providing for the expulsion of aliens and the prevention of their immigration were also passed. As they clearly violated article 14 of the Convention of 1884 Mr. Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, protested and they were withdrawn. England now evidently entered into the controversy.

The President stated emphatically that 'his Government could tolerate no interference in its internal relations, and the official discussion of affairs with the object of requiring changes would have to be avoided.' He refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of England, and denounced the claim as 'injurious to the dignity of an independent Republic.' The Transvaal, he maintained, was a sovereign State, and he proposed that differences between her and England should be referred to an independent arbitrator. To Lord Milner's proposal that the franchise should be granted to duly qualified Uitlanders after five years' residence, he replied that the Boers 'had paid for that country by their blood and they would be outvoted if the proposal was accepted.'

The moderate Afrikanders were disgusted at his obstinacy. 'I have always been a well-wisher of the Republic,' wrote Chief Justice de Villiers, 'and if I had any influence with the President I would advise him no longer to sit on the boiler to prevent it from bursting. . . . I confess I look with horror on a war to be fought by Afrikanders to bolster up President Kruger's régime.' The President, however, remained obdurate.

Disgust  
of the  
moderate  
Afrikan-  
ders.

England could not disregard the complaints of her subjects in the Transvaal. Their grievances were real and substantial, and she was perfectly justified under the Convention of 1884 in seeking to have them redressed. The fact that many who suffered were shareholders in Europe, and that those who crossed the Vaal were acquainted with the prevailing condition in the country they voluntarily entered, did not relieve the Government of the Republic of the obligation of giving due attention to the demands of the British Government. Moreover, as the paramount power in South Africa, England was entitled to speak with authority to a small community who, by their bigoted conservatism, were shaking the loyalty of her own subjects and menacing the peace of South Africa.

Legitimate  
grievances  
of the Uit-  
landers;  
England's  
obligations.

She had no legal right, however, to insist upon the Boers altering their electoral system. 'Since the electoral franchise was a matter entirely within the competence of the South African Republic, Britain must, if she desired to abide by the principles of international law, confine herself to recommendation

An ill-  
chosen  
issue.

and advice. She had no right to demand, no right to insist that her advice should be followed. . . . A refusal to enlarge the franchise would not furnish any *casus belli*.<sup>1</sup> The possession of the franchise was regarded as the panacea for the complaints of the Uitlanders, and the British Government made it the object of her efforts instead of concentrating her attention on the actual grievances of her subjects, and consequently when war was declared England found herself without any legitimate cause for war.

It is regrettable that the authorities did not recognize that the President's undemocratic and incompetent Government contained within itself the seeds of its own destruction; that the President's offer of August 19, 1899, to recommend to the Volksraad the five years' franchise asked for by Lord Milner at the Bloemfontein Conference, subject to certain conditions 'which had little importance, and were afterwards so explained as to have even less,' was not frankly accepted; that the cry of 'Avenge Majuba' was heard in the colonies, and that the British Government made such ominous preparations for war, indulged in such menacing language, and so ludicrously under-estimated the intensity of the Boers' feelings and the completeness of their military equipment.

On the other hand it is deplorable that the Government of the Republic should have viewed England with such steady hostility and distrust. According to them 'from Slagter's Nek to Laing's Nek, from

Lamentable  
errors (a)  
Of the  
British  
Govern-  
ment.

(b) Of the  
Transvaal  
Govern-  
ment.

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*, p. xxx.

the Pretoria Convention to the Bloemfontein Conference,' the British had 'ever been the treaty-breakers and robbers.' The diamond-fields of Kimberley, the beautiful land of Natal, were robbed from 'them,' and now the same British 'wanted' the gold-fields of the Witwatersrand. The Government's attitude appeared to the English authorities a direct challenge to their supremacy in South Africa. It seemed to them that the Boers of the South African Republic were aiming at the winning of South Africa for the Dutch race. Mr. Chamberlain maintained that 'in the interests of South Africa, and in the interests of the British Empire, Great Britain must remain the paramount power in South Africa.'

The Boers finally addressed an ultimatum to the Imperial Government which no self-respecting power could tolerate, and on October 10, 1899, the British Empire found itself at war with the South African Republic. The final result was a foregone conclusion, but the record of the stinging defeats suffered by our forces, and the bungling and mismanagement of the War Office during the course of the protracted struggle, is relieved by the spectacle of the troops spontaneously offered by the Dominions fighting alongside the British regulars for the cause of the Empire, the magnificent generosity of the Imperial Government when victorious, and the liberality of those political concessions to South Africa which struck the imagination of the world and have had such happy results.

The South  
African  
War. A  
magnani-  
mous  
victor.

# The Policy of Co-operation

## CHAPTER XVI

### COLONIAL NATIONALISM

THE presence of the colonial troops on the battle-fields of South Africa not only taught

The effect of the participation of colonial contingents in the South African War upon the growth of colonial nationalism. sceptics in the United Kingdom that the oversea members of the Empire were ready to rally round the old standard in its hour of need, but, as the reports of their prowess reached their native shores, sent a joyful thrill of self-consciousness through the several polities of the self-governing Dominions.

Canadians, Maorilanders, and Australians were blazoning their names on records perused by all Europe. The national spirit, then so profoundly stirred, had been moving the various Dominions according to their seniority for some considerable time, and had already culminated, or speedily found its consummation, in the federations and unions now to be found within the Empire. Their advent is and has been a fact of the greatest moment in colonial history, and has had an important and decided effect on the policy and the attitude of the mother country towards the oversea Dominions.

One of the most remarkable features of the history of the nineteenth century is the tendency of states, which have interests in common, to bind themselves together by some federal tie for

their mutual advantage. 'The day of small kingdoms with their petty jealousies has passed. The future is with the great empires.'<sup>1</sup> In Canada, Australia, and South Africa the spirit of nationalism has moved a sufficient number of the inhabitants to subordinate their provincial prejudices and their love of State independence to their desire to institute a central Government, which, as the representative of the Dominion, Commonwealth, or Union to which they belong, might speak authoritatively to the world in the interests of the Canadian, Australian, or South African nation.

The first requirement of nationalism, as a political principle, is a single sovereignty co-extensive with the geographical boundaries of the people.'<sup>2</sup> This enabling condition was in reality present in the colonies when they became self-governing. It was but natural that they should then proceed to the next stage in their political evolution, and unite by their own consent for their material advantage. Federation is only self-government writ large.

In each of them there were social, economic, and political forces of varying intensity, which were centrifugal rather than centripetal in their tendency. In Canada there were two races, speaking different languages and accustomed to different laws and political institutions; in South Africa

The world-wide tendency in the nineteenth century to federate and unite.

FEDERATION—Self-Government writ large.

Centrifugal forces in Canada, Australia, and South Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. Chamberlain at Johannesburg.

<sup>2</sup> Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*.



there were not only two races, set against each other by the mutual dislike which had been engendered by long and bitter strife, but an indigent coloured population of increasing numerical strength; in Australia, West Australia and New South Wales were completely separated owing to the magnitude of a continent and its natural physical features, which also made the interests of Northern Queensland dissimilar in many important respects to those of Tasmania, while different colonies had radically different fiscal policies.

Nevertheless the forces making for union were stronger in each case. Underlying every movement were the subconscious promptings of nationhood, the silent but insistent mentor which stimulated that desire for the creation of a national State which is innate in all peoples, and only requires for its awakening the attainment of a proper stage of development. But sentiment is not sufficient in itself. It must be reinforced by a sense of material advantage. In Canada the hope of allaying the racial friction between the two races, and a determination not to be absorbed by a possibly hostile neighbour on the south but to live under the political institutions of British origin and develop North America as an independent nation, brought about the Federation of 1867. In Australia the homogeneity of the population, the fear of European and Asiatic aggression, and the conscious want of a federal authority to legislate on such matters as defence, external affairs, letter conveyance, shipping dues, lighthouses, weights and measures, and tariffs, led Australians to give a Constitution

to a continent inhabited by one race. In South Africa the movement had a chequered career. The far-sighted policies of Sir George Grey and Lord Carnarvon were defeated by the vacillation of the Colonial Office and the indiscretion of Mr. J. A. Froude. Any *rapprochement* between the several States was for long unthinkable. And yet the need of a central Legislature to fix Customs duties, construct public works, facilitate postal and telegraphic communications, and defeat the machinations of the Conference Steamship Company, had for long been felt. When allegiance was acknowledged to the one Crown and the boon of self-government conferred, the component States came together into the Union which was sanctioned by the King in 1910.

We have spoken of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa as nations, but they have no such international status. Were a foreign power to have a serious grievance against any one of them it would address its remonstrance to the Imperial Government. They are in spirit what they are not in legal fact.

The Dominions —nations in the making now destitute of international status.

They acknowledge the sovereignty of the one King; appeals may be made from the highest of the Dominion Courts to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; Bills passed by the Dominion Legislatures may be reserved by the Viceroyal representative for the consideration of His Majesty's Government; on the stern of the Australian warships may always be seen the White Ensign as a symbol of the authority of the Crown; and the foreign policy of the Empire is controlled by the British Cabinet, and more especially by

Sir Edward Grey. But the last twenty years have witnessed a remarkable increase in the actual powers and pretensions of the Dominions simultaneously with the growth of their national spirit, and present tendencies indicate that the vital principle of self-government is not yet fully developed.

The Federal Legislatures are no longer disposed to allow measures which receive their assent to be held up by the Vice-regal representative until they are sanctioned or rejected by the Imperial Parliament. Their Executives claim to be His Majesty's advisers equally with the British Government, although that distinctive title is reserved by courtesy to that body, and maintain that they have the same right to advise the Crown directly as the Imperial Government. Quite recently Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke significantly of the Canadian Government as His Majesty's Government. If the appointment of the Duke of Connaught to Canada be taken as a precedent, and the Governors-General of tomorrow be drawn from the Royal Family, it is extremely likely that the future will witness a happy recognition of this proud claim.

The Australians would have preferred that their own High Court should be their final Court of Appeal. Not having that, except in certain constitutional questions, they have insisted, and have been supported in their attitude by the Prime Ministers of the other oversea Dominions, that there should be one Imperial Court of Appeal instead of one for the United Kingdom and a 'scratch Court' for them. The Imperial Govern-

ment acceded to their request by strengthening the personnel of the Bench, and providing that as far as possible a full Court should consider the United Kingdom and Dominion cases in rotation.

Again, whereas the Canadians must appeal to the Imperial Parliament if they wish any amendment of their Constitution of 1867, the Australian Constitution, presented by the majority of the people of Australia for the signature of the Queen in 1900, may be altered according to the will of a majority of the electors and a majority of the States of Australia.

The Dominions to-day are inclined to object to the overriding power of the Imperial Parliament, despite the extreme rarity of its use; to add to the dignity and repute of their own Supreme Courts; and to insist that where their cases are carried to the United Kingdom they shall be treated as are those from the United Kingdom.

Their fiscal policies, their preparations for naval and military defence, and their claim that they should be consulted before being committed by the Imperial Government to any agreement which that Executive may negotiate, again reveal the workings of the spirit of nationalism.

At its bidding they have each adopted protective tariffs. But since the delivery of those masterly speeches by Sir Samuel Griffith and Mr. Hofmeyr in 1887 and Mr. Foster in 1894, they have demonstrated their desire to promote the unity of the Empire, and shown their goodwill towards their mother country by giving her hand-

Their nationalist  
fiscal  
policies.

With preferences  
in favour  
of the  
mother  
country.

some commercial preferences in comparison with foreign nations.

In 1900 Canada made a reduction in her favour of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent., and her Government was prepared to go even further 'if they could be assured that the Imperial Government would accept the principle of preferential trade generally, and particularly grant to the food products of Canada in the United Kingdom exemption from duties now levied or hereafter imposed.'<sup>1</sup> If, however, they went on, in significant words,<sup>2</sup> 'after using every effort to bring about such a readjustment of the fiscal policy of the Empire, the Canadian Government should find that the principle of preferential trade is not acceptable to the colonies generally or the mother country, then Canada should be free to take such action as might be deemed necessary in the presence of such conditions.' No reciprocal advance was made, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, discouraged by the rebuff, and feeling no longer obliged to ask his country to make sacrifices for England which evoked no response, negotiated the famous commercial treaty with President Taft.

Nothing more clearly illustrates the intense desire of the Dominions to clothe themselves with the powers and to accept the responsibilities incidental to their status than the eagerness and decision with which they have incurred the burdens of their military and naval defence.

Before Federation they showed a marked reluctance to recognize obligations of this character.

<sup>1</sup> Jebb, *Imperial Conference*, vol. i, pp. 368-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1887, it was only after some haggling that the British Admiralty managed to squeeze £126,000 from the six jangling States into which Australia was then divided. There was no desire at that stage in their evolution for an Australian Navy, although Mr. Deakin insisted that the system of colonial contributions was merely temporary, and significantly observed: 'We look forward to what I might call a gradual assumption of all the responsibilities of maturity.'

But it was apparent to thoughtful men that the existing distribution of the cost of Imperial security could not continue. It was preposterous that, while the self-governing colonies possessed one-fifth of the trade of the Empire, they should contribute less than one-hundredth part of the cost of protecting that trade, despite the fact that their population was almost one-third and their revenue nearly half that of the United Kingdom. It was most inequitable that the poverty-stricken wage-earners of the great industrial towns should pay at least ten times as much to maintain a fleet commensurate with the dignity and requirements of the British Empire as the Australians, whose liberty, democratic institutions, and ideals depend upon the retention by that fleet of its naval supremacy. Mr. Chamberlain went to the root of the question when he addressed the following words to the members of the Imperial Conference in 1902. 'The privileges which you enjoy may involve corresponding obligations. The responsibilities must be reciprocal and must be shared in common, and I do not think that any Empire may be said to be on a sure foundation which is not based upon recognized community of sacrifices.'

The Dominions, with the exception of Canada, which was 'contemplating the establishment of a local naval force in the waters of Canada,' increased their contributions. But with the advent of Federation the system of contributions became antagonistic to the national sentiment. The strength of this sentiment varied according to the stage attained by the several Dominions in their political evolution. It was potent in Canada before it was in Australia, and in Australia before it was in New Zealand. Both the former now desired to possess their own army and their own navy.

They frowned upon the proposal of the Secretary of State for War in 1902 that the colonies should organize, equip, and train an expeditionary force earmarked for Imperial service. They preferred to reserve to themselves the right to determine how and to what extent they should render assistance when the need arose. In recent years Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, stimulated by a consciousness of their isolation and their responsibilities as young powers, have instituted compulsory military training, and proved their readiness to provide for their own military defence.

Impelled by the same aspiring sentiment, the Governments of the two senior Dominions preferred to build navies of their own rather than make cash contributions. As nationalists and autonomists they preferred to have a fleet owned by them, manned by their own people, subject to their control, and available for participation in international warfare only if they were agreeable. They recognized that their ambitions could only

be gratified at great cost, but they saw other small nations like Holland heroically shouldering the burden of their defence. They agreed that much more money was needed in their young countries for developmental purposes than in the United Kingdom, but submitted that the mother country needed money for purposes unknown to them, such as the modernization of unscientifically built cities and the accomplishment of social reforms. Moreover, were they to subscribe to the principle of centralized control, they felt that the vessels for which they had paid might be used to enforce measures of which they disapproved; while the accommodation, discipline, and rates of pay on British warships was such as to discourage their fellow-citizens from joining the navy.

Governed by these considerations, they elected to construct fleet units. Political disaster overtook the Liberal party in Canada before they could give effect to their policy, but the world has heard of the achievements of the Australian navy.

This nationalist policy in naval and military affairs is not the result of any want of loyalty.

Sentiment of nationalism not antagonistic to sentiment of loyalty. The presence of troops from the Oversea Dominions on the veldts of South Africa and the battle-fields of Europe, and the activity of the Australian naval squadron in the Pacific, merely justifies the faith of the 'theorists of 1830' in the fundamental principle they enunciated. 'In certain cases,' said Sir William Molesworth on one occasion, 'it would not be unreasonable to expect that the colonies should assist the Empire both with troops and with money. I feel convinced that if the colonies were governed as they ought



to be they would gladly and willingly come to the aid of the mother country in any just and necessary war.'

Any discussion of a nation's defence policy naturally leads up to a consideration of its foreign policy. The two are inseparably connected, and the stronger the one becomes the bolder and more decided becomes the other. As the Dominions became conscious of themselves, they felt that they were entitled to a voice in deliberations at which decisions vitally affecting them might be reached.

His Majesty's Government, however, were of the opinion that the interests of the Dominions were too small as compared with those of the United Kingdom to warrant their participation in the control of the foreign policy of the Empire. As the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman tersely put it, 'the cost of naval defence and the responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs hang together.'<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, however, the British Government has been careful, when negotiating commercial treaties, to exempt the Dominions from their application if they so desire. But some of the members of 'the family of nations' were not content. The Australian Government resented being committed by the Imperial Government to the provisions of the Declaration of London, which was of the greatest importance to them, without being consulted, despite the fact that they intimated their desire to be consulted two years before the negotiations connected with that agreement were practically concluded. At the

<sup>1</sup> At the Colonial Conference, 1907.

Conference of 1911, the Australian Prime Minister criticized the British Government in very moderate but unmistakable language for deliberately ignoring his Government on a matter which specially affected the Commonwealth. He proceeded to lay down very far-reaching principles.

‘Hitherto the Dominions have not, as far as my knowledge goes,’ he said,<sup>1</sup> ‘been consulted prior to negotiations being entered into by the mother country with other countries, as regards treaties, or anything that led up to a treaty, or a declaration of this kind; I hold strongly the view . . . that that is a weak link in the chain of our common interests. Since we are now a family of nations, has not the time arrived for the Oversea Dominions to be informed, and whenever possible consulted, as to the best means of promoting the interests of all concerned, when the mother country has decided to open negotiations with foreign powers in regard to matters which involve the interests of the Dominions? We do not desire in any way to restrict the final and arbitrary powers of the mother country; that is not our desire at all, but we do think and we shall press upon you. Mr. Asquith, as representing the centre of the Empire, the Government of the United Kingdom, which has in many matters the management of the whole of the affairs of the Empire, that it would be advisable for you, wherever possible, at any rate in important matters which concern us, such as this, to take us into your confidence prior to committing us.’

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings of Imperial Conference, 1911, p. 97.*

The representatives of the other self-governing Dominions, with the exception of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, quite agreed with Mr. Fisher. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's argument. Sir Wilfrid held that if the Dominions claimed a right to be consulted, and they were consulted and their advice was followed, they would be bound to participate with England in a war ensuing on the adoption of such advice. He could give no promise that Canada would automatically engage in wars entered upon by the United Kingdom. 'We have taken the position in Canada,' he said,<sup>1</sup> 'that we do not think we are bound to take part in every war, and that our fleet may not be called upon in all cases.' In his judgement the diplomatic part of the Government of the Empire ought to be left entirely to the Government of the United Kingdom.

But the interests of the component parts of the Empire are inseparably intertwined. In the event of the mother country suffering a deserved defeat, the consequences would recoil upon the self-governing Dominions. Even if one or more of the Governments of the members of the family did not approve of the action of the British Government, and refused to allow their naval and military forces to participate, sentiment would be outraged, many would serve in an unofficial capacity, and great friction and unpleasantness would ensue. Indeed, secession would be inevitable. It would therefore seem eminently desirable that the minds of the various Governments should be open one to the other, that there should be the fullest understanding between them, and

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of the Imperial Conference*, 1911, p. 117.

that they should consult freely together so that the foreign policy of the Empire will be truly an Imperial one. Were the Foreign Secretary to address an ultimatum to a foreign power, he might do so, assured of the unanimous support of every Responsible Government, and convinced that his action would be endorsed by informed public opinion.

Events move so swiftly during the closing moments of an international crisis that the burden of responsibility must of necessity rest finally upon the British Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. There would be no time for consultation with the Governments of the sister nations. But since their decision would only be the logical outcome of a policy upon which the Empire was agreed, there would be the fullest confidence in their wisdom and diplomatic skill at the last.

Having listened to Mr. Fisher's address Sir Edward Grey's reply was simple, direct, and pregnant. 'I agree, and the Government agrees entirely, that the Dominions ought to be consulted.'<sup>1</sup> The overseas representatives were invited to attend a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and were taken completely into the confidence of His Majesty's Government. The Foreign Secretary gave them an exposition of our foreign relations, and discussed with them their bearing upon the problems of Imperial Defence. This remarkable exhibition of trust and goodwill was highly appreciated by the honoured overseas statesmen. A long stride had been taken in a most desirable direction. Owing to the kaleidoscopic nature of

The reply  
of the  
Imperial  
Govern-  
ment.

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of the Imperial Conference*, 1911, p. 114.

international affairs, such round-table conferences to discuss the foreign policy of the Empire should take place at more frequent intervals, and, since the people have to bear the whole burden of any trouble that ensues, they might reasonably expect to be more fully informed in the future as to the trend of our diplomacy and the nature of the responsibilities to which they are being committed by responsible statesmen.

The strength and vitality of the principle of national autonomy, which recent events have thus thrown into such high relief, has determined the present, and will determine still further the future, organization of the Empire—the absorbing Imperial topic of our time. We have now to consider more closely the effect which the recognition of its force has had upon the policy of the mother country, and the machinery which has been introduced and has been suggested by the United Kingdom and the Dominions to ensure the integrity of the Empire.

Step in  
the right  
direction.

The  
influence  
of the  
principle  
of national  
autonomy  
upon the  
organiza-  
tion of the  
Empire.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ENGLAND'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE YOUNG NATIONS

DURING the last twenty years England has regarded the attainment of their majority by her one-time colonies with benevolent equanimity and pride. The old gloomy pessimism and fatalistic indifference are no more. She has found that her children, whom she thought extravagant in their demands and bent on independence, are only anxious to consolidate the Empire to which they rejoice to belong. Moreover, she can no longer afford to think lightly of them hiving off into independent communities. The last fifty years have witnessed the entrance of Germany and Italy into the concert of modern powers, and the phenomenal growth of America. England's relative position is not what it was, and she now appreciates the value of her Oversea Dominions.

In 1867 Brown, one of the leading public men in Canada, who was deputed to sound the Imperial authorities as to their views on the proposed federation of the provinces, was able to report that it gave 'prodigious satisfaction.' 'The Ministry, the Conservatives, and the Manchester men are all delighted with it, and everything Canadian has gone up in public estimation

immensely.”<sup>1</sup> But he quickly realized why they beamed so benignly upon the scheme. ‘There is a manifest desire in almost every quarter,’ he noted with regret, ‘that ere long the British American colonies should shift for themselves, and, in some quarters, evident regret that we did not declare at once for independence.’ The Federal Constitutions of Australia and South Africa were sanctioned with the same urbanity and goodwill. But the feelings with which their development into nations was welcomed were profoundly different. The South Africans were graciously invested with enlarged powers, not in order to accelerate their separation from the mother country, but to enable Liberty to forge another link with which to bind the Empire more closely together.

There has been the fullest recognition of the implications of the new status of the Dominions

Recognition of the new status of the Dominions.

They are no longer regarded as an extension of England, a part of Greater Britain, or as her possessions, but as forming with her a partnership whose members desire to do things together.

‘When I speak of our Colonies,’ said Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in 1903,<sup>2</sup> ‘it is an expression; they are not ours—they are not ours in the sense that we possess them. They are sister States, able to treat with us from an equal position, able to hold to us, willing to hold to us, but able also to break with us.’

It is agreed that each member of the family of nations shall be the master of his own household.

<sup>1</sup> Lucas, *Historical Geography; Canada*, vol. ii, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> Speech at Glasgow, October 1903.

No other arrangement would be compatible with the freedom which is the lifeblood of their several polities. None will submit to external dictation as to the policy they should pursue. The strength of the Empire lies in the recognition by its component parts of this fundamental principle, which, in another guise, we have already frequently met.

The Admiralty may believe in the maxim 'one sea, one navy, one control,' naval strategists may

Australian  
Govern-  
ment  
assisted  
when de-  
termining  
the  
character  
of its  
navy.

and do denounce the policy of Dominion fleet units as a direct invitation to piecemeal destruction, but the English Government have cordially assisted the Australian Government in the construction of their fleet. A wish has at times been expressed that an expeditionary

force should be trained in the Dominions and earmarked for Imperial Service, but Lord Haldane

Dominions'  
control  
over their  
armies  
absolute.

has assured their Governments<sup>1</sup> that the Government of the United Kingdom do not 'wish in the slightest degree even to suggest' that they 'should

bow' their 'heads to any direction from home in military matters.' 'Hitherto,' said Mr. Fisher in 1911,<sup>2</sup> 'we have been negotiating with the

Represent-  
atives  
of the  
Dominions  
taken into  
the confi-  
dence of the  
Imperial  
Govern-  
ment.

Government of the United Kingdom at the portals of the household.' Now 'the representatives of the Dominions have been admitted as it were into the interior, into the innermost parts of the Imperial household, . . . the arcana imperii have been laid bare to them without

any kind of reservation or qualification.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At Colonial Conference, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> *Imperial Conference*, 1911, p. 438. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.



The unique and peculiar character of the Imperial Conference and the Office of a High Commissioner, the two media, apart from the usual gubernatorial channel, for intercourse between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Dominions, is consistent with and indeed due to the application of the same principle.

In many respects the duties of the High Commissioners are identical with those of an Ambassador. They are appointed by and responsible to their respective Governments for whom they stand before the British people, and for whom they act as confidential agents. As the power of the Dominions increases, the powers of High Commissioners will be enlarged, until, as Mr. Fisher has foreshadowed, they may confer with the representatives of other powers.

Indeed Sir Joseph Ward has proposed 'that the High Commissioner should become the sole channel of communication between the Imperial Government and the Dominion Government,'<sup>1</sup> and press in person upon the Colonial Secretary or Foreign Secretary the ideas and views of the Government he represents. All communications between the Governors-General and the Secretary of State would thus be cut off except those of a strictly official character, and the former could no longer enforce by explanation and discussion the opinions of the Imperial Government.

But the High Commissioner could only be

<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Conference*, 1911, p. 82.

invested with such powers if the Governor-General's relation to the Dominion Government corresponded with that which subsists between the King and the Imperial Government. The Senior Dominion has already suggested, as we have observed, that such a relationship should be established. These great changes, which promise to add to the dignity and authority of 'the sister Nations' are still in the air, but that they should be suggested indicates the trend of the thoughts of the oversea Dominions.

The Imperial Conference is an essentially British institution—a political instrument forged in the workshop of Experience to promote effectively the closer unity of the self-governing states of the Empire. It has no parallel in history. The alterations in form and in character which it has undergone since its inception in 1887 illustrate once more the gradual recognition by the mother country of the effect of the triumph of the principle of nationality in the self-governing Dominions upon her policy towards them.

Every four years the Prime Ministers of the self-governing states of the Empire and those of their colleagues whom they may appoint meet in London under the presidency of the First Minister of the United Kingdom to take counsel together about the matters which concern them all. As Governments they meet on an equal footing having the same voting power although the seniority and extensive interests of the United Kingdom are duly recognized. Every representative is present of his own accord. There is no compulsion of any kind.

(b) The  
Imperial  
Conference.

Its con-  
stitutional  
principle.

The fullest and frankest discussion has become traditional that there may be a perfectly free interchange of opinions resulting in a better understanding of reciprocal requirements. It is purely a deliberative body. It has no Legislative or Executive power. Such decisions as may be arrived at must be ratified by the Parliaments of the different States.

These Conferences have been most fruitful. Many beneficent changes have been brought about, such as the construction of the Pacific Cable, the reduction of cable rates, postage rates and canal dues which help to annihilate the distances which separate the component parts of the Empire. Discussion has frequently failed to amend such laws of the United Kingdom as those relating to Shipping and Navigation, and income-taxes and death duties, but it has promoted a better understanding. The frank and cordial admission of the oversea Representatives to the deliberations of the Committee of Imperial Defence stirred their hearts and deepened their comprehension of the problems and responsibilities of Empire. Above all an admirable opportunity has been given for the discussion of schemes which have been calculated to promote the permanent union of the self-governing States.

All are agreed nowadays that such a union is eminently desirable. But there is a profound difference of opinion as to the method by which that object is to be achieved. Two ideals have been struggling for mastery. On the one hand there are those who, marking the success which has attended the various federations which have

The future  
organiza-  
tion of the  
Empire—  
Two con-  
flicting  
ideals.

been consummated during the nineteenth century, have advocated Imperial Federation; on the other hand there are those who have a profound belief in the democratic principle of autonomy, and, guided by deductions from the history of the evolution of the Empire and the tendencies of the moment which to them foreshadow a further logical development of that evolutionary process, hold that the Empire of the future will consist of several puissant nations bound together by co-operative alliances and acknowledging their allegiance to the one Sovereign.

Members of each school of thought have championed the fiscal policy known as preferential

Preferential trade compatible with the ideal of a co-operative alliance.

trade. It is felt that an imperial consciousness of economic interdependence is the soundest guarantee of Imperial Unity. Any true Federation, however, would seem impossible without Free Trade within the Empire and a tariff hostile to

foreigners. But Free Trade within the Empire is not consonant with the nationalist spirit which, as we have observed, animates the Dominions and has led them to develop their own resources in order to supply their own requirements. But differential duties are quite compatible with national tariffs. Preferential trade, the vital principle of an organic union, would therefore seem to be consistent with the ideal of a Britannic Alliance rather than with the ideal of an Imperial Federation.

Developments of momentous importance are felt to be impending in the relations between Great Britain and her Dominions. Neither the ideal of Imperial Federation, nor the fiscal policy of Preferential trade has yet triumphed, nor has

a Britannic Alliance of a definite and official character yet been effected. We have now to examine the ideas underlying these contending ideals, the reasons which have accelerated or retarded the realization of them, and finally to endeavour to forecast the final outcome of England's colonial policy.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE IDEAL OF IMPERIAL FEDERATION

THE ideal of an Imperial Federation has been one of the most persistent in the colonial history of Great Britain. The minds of the great statesmen, who have brooded over the problems of Empire from the days of Edmund Burke to those of Lord Rosebery and Joseph Chamberlain, have been haunted by the attractive image of a potent federal Legislature in which the representatives of the component parts of a vast Empire are met together to consider, in a lofty and dispassionate spirit, the multifarious interests of the greatest political entity known to man.

The growth and development of the oversea Dominions in recent times have only strengthened the conviction of many political thinkers in the United Kingdom, and a few in the self-governing States, that a federal Government is most desirable. The imagination is not taxed to picture the Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa of the future with their millions of people and the wealth and strength that their presence implies. But the population that is to be will not be entirely of British origin. Even in Australia, the most British of the Dominions, the fourth generation are Australians first. If, as is extremely

likely, their numerical strength is supplemented by an indraught of other races as that of the United States has been, is it not possible that their attachment to the Throne and the British connexion will be proportionately weakened? And if this be so, what shall we say of the Canadians, the New Zealanders, and the South Africans of the future in whose blood contributory streams from the French and Americans, the Maoris and the Dutch already mingle with that of purely British origin. It might seem imperative, while yet there is time, to tie these puissant young nations to their mother country by the device of a federal Parliament, to which, as to a common centre, all eyes might be turned, ever eager to rest with genuine respect and affection upon the Throne firmly established above that august assembly.

Furthermore, British statesmen have observed, and have been plainly reminded by the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, that the self-governing States are fretting at the inferiority of their political status, which they deem derogatory to their material greatness. The most distinguished of the colonial Federalists only recently informed Great Britain that 'she does not possess the over-sea Dominions—they are no longer Crown Colonies. They create with her an Empire, and, allowing for power and numbers, they belong to that Empire just as she does. It is a family group of free nations. England is the first among the free nations.'<sup>1</sup> He felt that the day had arrived when the oversea Dominions should be taken

Desire  
of the  
Dominions  
to be taken  
fully into  
partner-  
ship.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Ward, *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 48.

completely into partnership. Despite Sir Wilfrid Laurier's plain statement that his Government did not consider themselves bound to participate in every war in which the United Kingdom became involved, from the point of view of international law, Canada is as much a part of the Empire as England is. If England goes to war, the British Empire is at war. The only alternative is secession. In other words the young nations might be committed to all that war entails without their knowledge and possibly without their concurrence. In view of such contingencies, it has been felt that they are entitled to a proportionate voice in the election of the body whose Executive should control the foreign policy of the Empire. 'As the years go on, the voice of the great democracies in the oversea Dominions will not be stopped from advocating, that, where they are expected, and rightly so, to share in the responsibilities of the troubles that may ensue connected with any war affecting the stability of the British Empire, they are entitled, as a matter of right, not as a matter of appeal, to have some say, even although they be in a minority, upon some properly constituted body that is going to decide the question as to whether there is to be peace or war.'<sup>1</sup>

Tendencies, from the Federalist point of view, are in the wrong direction. Already Australia and Canada have adopted naval policies, which, in Sir Joseph Ward's opinion, are costly, weak, and strategically indefensible, enhancing the difficulties of the Admiralty, adding inordinately to the burdens of the Australians and Canadians,

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Ward, *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 67.



when Canada converts professions into actions, and strengthening undesirable proclivities. The wiser procedure, to the mind of his school, is the system of contributions to the Imperial Exchequer.

Various suggestions have been offered from time to time in order to translate this attractive ideal into a political instrument. The latest, and perhaps the most concrete, was that advanced by Sir Joseph Ward, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, at the Imperial Conference in 1911.<sup>1</sup> He proposed that 'an Imperial Parliament of Defence should be created, empowered to determine peace or war, to fix the contributions required from the component members of the Federation towards the cost of adequate Imperial defence, to shape the foreign policy in so far as it affected the Empire, to enter into international agreements and to transact such other imperial business as might by common agreement be transferred to its jurisdiction.'

This Legislature was bicameral. The House of Representatives was to consist of three hundred members elected every five years by the white electors of the United Kingdom and self-governing Dominions on the basis of one member for every 200,000 people; the other house was to consist of twelve members, two being elected by each member of the Confederation for a term and in a manner to be determined by each division of the Empire. An Executive, of which one member was to be a Senator, was to be chosen by and responsible to the parliamentary body. It was to be the final arbiter of peace or war.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Ward, *Imperial Conference*, 1911, p. 36.

Sir J.  
Ward's  
concrete  
proposal  
at Im-  
perial  
Conference,  
1911.

For the first ten years this Parliament was to have no power of taxation, but the amount payable by each of the Dominions should be a debt payable to the Exchequer of the Imperial Parliament of Defence. At the expiration of ten years such amount should be raised and paid in such a manner as the respective Dominions agreed to. The amount to be contributed for Imperial Defence and war by the oversea Dominions was to be per capita of the population, not more than 50 per cent. of the amount per capita of the population contributed by the United Kingdom for this purpose, but for all other purposes the contributions should be on an equal per capita basis.

The scheme further presupposed that, in the United Kingdom, Home Rule all round would be an accomplished fact, and that the Imperial Parliament, whose constitution has just been outlined would ultimately take the place of the existing Imperial Parliament.

Three general objections might at once be lodged against this elaborate and highly artificial political contrivance. Despite the teaching of History, Sir Joseph Ward attempted to deal with defence and foreign affairs regardless of commercial policies. In every federation of the nineteenth century a

Objections  
to the  
scheme.

customs union has either preceded and been an enabling factor of considerable potency in promoting a constitutional union, or, when Federation has been accomplished, the control of the Customs has been delegated at once to the Federal Legislature which is thus provided with an effective weapon with which to

An im-  
practicable  
divorce.

wage war peacefully upon other nations in the course of its administration of the Departments of Defence and External Affairs. His reason for withholding the control of the fiscal policy from his Imperial Parliament was obvious. He simply recognized the steady devotion of the majority of the people in the United Kingdom and the Dominions to Free Trade and Protection respectively. But the restriction which he was therefore obliged to impose on this academic Assembly would have prevented it from adequately discussing the subjects within its control without constantly exceeding its jurisdiction, and feeling conscious of its impotence. Its deliberations would simply have been farcical.

Moreover the Dominions could never regard with equanimity their decided minority for an indefinite, and at best a lengthy, period in the Representative Chamber. In Sir Joseph Ward's Parliament they together would have had seventy-seven members while the United Kingdom was represented by 220. In the Senate positions would be reversed. The United Kingdom could never have more than two representatives in that Chamber while the Dominions had ten, despite the disparity in their respective populations and interests at stake. The party system has become characteristic of every democratic Legislature and there is no reason to suppose that this Parliament would be an exception to the general rule. How great would be the intricacy of the confusion which would ensue were some issue to arise upon which the United Kingdom and the Dominions were sharply divided! A deadlock of an insoluble

Proposed  
legislature  
unwork-  
able.

and irritating kind would be reached. What then ?

And, finally, the financial proposals of Sir Joseph Ward were absolutely impracticable. A Legislative body was to be created with the power to spend as it pleased without being responsible for the provision of the revenue necessary for such expenditure. This body, in which the Dominions would be in a pronounced minority, might impose upon them a policy of which they disapproved which would probably involve an expenditure to be met by the imposition of taxation on a possibly dissentient community by their own government. Such an undemocratic, impossible proposition could never find acceptance.

Furthermore there are several other good reasons why Imperial Federation must be dismissed by the people of the Dominions and the United Kingdom as an impracticable ideal. Such a federal Parliament would encroach upon the self-governing powers of the Dominions. Australia would be obliged to abandon the policy of an Australian navy to which she has wholeheartedly committed herself. With that she would have to sacrifice whatever voice the possession of it gives her in our foreign policy. For her Government has clearly laid it down that they reserve to themselves the right of allowing the Australian navy to co-operate with that of the United Kingdom in the event of war.

(a) Local navies. A Federal Parliament would also control immigration. On this supremely important question

the Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans are emphatically of one mind. For economic, social, and racial reasons they have pledged themselves to restrict the influx of coloured aliens to the utmost of their power. Their view is that every self-governing Dominion must determine for itself whom it admits within its borders and to its citizenship. This right they treasure as one of the most important attributes of sovereignty which the British Government has delegated to the Dominions. 'The principle of a Dominion or any part of a Dominion having the right to say what shall be the composition of its population is a principle which I think South Africa will maintain to the last.'<sup>1</sup> Their claim has been recognized by the British Government. 'Nobody,' said the Marquess of Crewe recently,<sup>2</sup> 'can attempt to dispute the right of the self-governing Dominions to decide for themselves whom, in each case, they will admit as citizens of their respective Dominions.' Despite this frank recognition, however, the Dominions reasonably fear that in a Federal Legislature where the influence of the United Kingdom is so overwhelmingly in the ascendant, their objections might not be sufficiently considered. The Imperial Government has always been fearful that the Anti-Asiatic legislation of the self-governing Colonies might alienate friendly powers and impair the loyalty of the native population of India. They seem unable to realize how confirmed the Dominions are in their objection on economic grounds to the

(b) Immi-  
gration  
policy.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Malan, *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 395.

advent of Asiatic people. Quite recently the Marquess of Crewe, once Secretary of State for the Colonies, asked the various Prime Ministers to place no serious obstacle in the way of Indians coming into their Dominions.<sup>1</sup> If so informed a statesman could make such a request, might not the ordinary member of Parliament be less sympathetic towards a white Australian policy? As Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out,<sup>1</sup> they cannot be encouraged to come, because, if they were, the liveliest remonstrances would at once be heard. This is one of those imperial questions which must be dealt with as local circumstances dictate.

(c) Power to fix the conditions of labour on their mercantile marine. A question, closely connected with that of immigration, arises if we compare the recent regulations passed by the Australian and New Zealand Parliaments stipulating the conditions which must obtain on vessels registered in their respective Dominions and trading in their waters, and on those liners which carry their mails, or British manufactures which desire to benefit by such preferences as are allowed, with those which satisfy the English Board of Trade. The New Zealand Government desires to maintain and increase the seafaring section of their population, but are determined that they shall be ensured a wage sufficient to support themselves, their wives and their children, in a degree of comfort deemed satisfactory by the people of New Zealand. Other British owned vessels, however, manned by cheaper labour so compete with the vessels of their country that they are beginning to fear that

<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Conference*, 1911, p. 407.

New Zealanders will be driven off the sea. They wish the British Government to legislate in a way calculated to serve their interests. That the British Government steadily refuse to do. While they agree that the New Zealand Government is best able to judge what suits their own people and what legislation is necessary, they submit that they, in their turn, are best able to judge what is best suited to the interests of the United Kingdom. Much as they may sympathize in theory with the good conditions assured by the New Zealand Government to the mariners of that Dominion, they are bound to consider their vast shipping trade with the rest of the world, which amounts to 87 per cent of the whole, and what they conceive to be their obligations to His Majesty's subjects in India who accept, without injury to their morals or their health, much smaller payments than the whites. Under the conditions so peculiar to the British Empire it would seem advisable to leave each of the various Responsible Governments to deal with such matters as these as their local needs and opinions require. But, were an Imperial Federal Parliament created and clothed with powers which its status implied, they would come within its purview and provoke irreconcilable and disturbing differences.

Moreover, since such a central Legislature would owe its existence to a widespread desire to maintain the integrity of the Empire, it would be incumbent upon it to exercise its supreme authority to defeat any far-reaching measures which would seem to imperil the unity of the Empire, however much they might serve the

(d) Power  
to enter  
into com-  
mercial  
treaties  
favourable  
to their  
interests.

immediate interests of those who supported them. Such undoubtedly would have been the effect of the famous Laurier-Taft pact had it been endorsed by the Canadian people. Assuming that they had given Sir Wilfrid Laurier a mandate to enter into reciprocal trade relations with the United States, what would an Imperial Government, were there one, have done? Possessed itself of the power of negotiating international agreements, credited with a wider outlook and a more imperial purpose than a Dominion Legislature and pledged to consolidate the Empire, it would probably regard such an agreement as beyond the power of the Dominion Parliament and seek to have it annulled.

The Dominions would then at once combine to protect the larger powers they have won in recent years. 'Possessing as we do in this Empire every kind of fiscal diversity, having been left free and autonomous in the matter, we must be allowed to pursue as from time to time the majority of our fellow countrymen think fit, such a fiscal policy, as, in the opinion of that majority, is best suited to the requirements of the particular part of the Empire for which we are responsible.'<sup>1</sup> The natural corollary of this trade diversity is diverse interests requiring diverse commercial treaties such as the Dominions have frequently been allowed to negotiate. This is a privilege which is not only useful to the Dominions, but a gratifying recognition of their greater stature. It has become so dear to them that any attempt to withdraw it or restrict its operation would be strenuously resisted.

Indeed, were Imperial Federation realized,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Asquith, *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 343.



constant friction would ensue between the Federal Federation would provoke constant litigation and friction. Parliament and the Legislatures of the Dominions and the United Kingdom. Even when the powers of the State and Federal Parliaments are strictly delimited in carefully considered constitutional instruments, such as the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, litigation between the State and Federal Legislatures as to the precise limitations of their powers is not unusual.

The Dominion Parliaments are very jealous of their powers and resent any exercise of its theoretical rights by the Government of the United Kingdom. Speaking at the Conference in 1911 to a resolution relating to the present state of the Navigation Laws in the Empire and in other countries, Senator Pearce said, 'The right of the Dominions to legislate in these matters should not be challenged or questioned. We should be given a free hand first of all to place on the Statute Book our view as to the dealing with this subject, and then the action to bring about uniformity should be subsequent to the Dominion's legislation being assented to by His Majesty's Government.' Each Government, he maintained, should be allowed to express its will by the passing of an Act and that Act should be assented to as a recognition of their power to deal with that subject. The self-governing Dominions say 'We do not want to be overridden in our Legislature by any other Legislature in the world.'<sup>1</sup>

From the Dominions' point of view the creation of an Imperial Federal Parliament would mean for them the resignation of powers they have

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Malan, *Imperial Conference*, 1911, p. 256.

learned to cherish or the institution of a meddling authority whose constant interference would promote discord and dissatisfaction. The proposal savours overmuch of the old centralization policy and seems to involve the loss of the priceless privileges incidental to self-government. Succeding years have strengthened rather than weakened their attachment to that principle and they will favour no suggested constitutional changes which even seem contrary to it.

The Federal ideal has always found more support in the homeland than in the oversea Dominions, but even there it has never commanded the enthusiasm of responsible statesmen in recent years. Whatever form the new Legislature should take, were it to come into being, the present Imperial Parliament would be deposed, and, were Sir Joseph Ward's dream realized, it would be gradually eclipsed. That prospect the Government of the United Kingdom at present regards with uncompromising hostility.

It would impair, if not altogether destroy, the authority of the Government of the United Kingdom in such grave matters as the conduct of foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, the declaration and maintenance of peace or the declaration of war, and, indeed, all those relations with foreign powers, necessarily of the most delicate character, which are now in the hands of the Imperial Government, subject to its responsibility to the Imperial Parliament. That authority cannot be shared, and the co-existence side by side with the Cabinet of the United Kingdom of this proposed body, . . . clothed with the

To the  
United  
Kingdom  
federation  
would  
mean

(a) Diminu-  
tion of  
authority.

functions and jurisdiction which Sir Joseph Ward proposed to invest it with, would, in our judgment, be absolutely fatal to our present system of Responsible Government.' <sup>1</sup>

Furthermore there is another good reason why the Liberal Party should discourage Imperial Federation. Assuming that no real Federal Legislature could be denied the control of the fiscal policy of the Empire, a coalition between the oversea representatives and those English members who believed in Protection would introduce at least a light protective tariff. Such a vital change would be abhorrent to the devotees of Free Trade and cause consternation amongst those vested interests which subscribe liberally to the funds of the party whose economic theories coincide with the dictates of their interests.

It is pertinent to inquire in this connexion as to government of the Dependencies were Imperial Federation to be accomplished. Since it is anticipated that the new Legislature will replace the existing Imperial Parliament, the natural conclusion is that the control of India and the Crown Colonies will be transferred to Ministers responsible to it. No statesman has ever dreamt of suggesting that the inhabitants of these dependencies should have a proportional representation in the Imperial Federal Parliament. Since that is obviously unthinkable, they would be condemned to remain permanently under the rule of the Colonial and Indian offices—a future which

(b) The introduction of a protective tariff.

To the Dependencies Imperial Federation would mean a future contrary to that to which present tendencies point.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Asquith, *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 71.

is contrary to the political development to which existing tendencies point.

A West Indian Federation is already on the political horizon, and the avowed aim of the Liberal Government, and especially of Lord Morley, is to make the Government of India more and more subject to the influence of native opinion. The argument that the members of the Empire gathered together in the Imperial Federal Legislature, deliberating together on the great problems of the Empire, would have their knowledge of it and their interest in it deepened and widened thereby, is purely theoretical. History gives us no warrant for believing that the ordinary member of the hypothetical Federal Legislature will either be interested in or informed about Jamaica, Papua, and the Chatham Islands, or the history, traditions and indigenous ideals of the Indian Empire.

If we have read the story of England's colonial history aright, the policy that will promote imperial evolution is that which encourages the advance of the dependencies towards national autonomy. It is because the ideal of Imperial Federation is the negation of this policy that it must now be discountenanced, and, if it were translated into a political instrument, however crude, it would be foredoomed to unhappy failure.

In view then of the strange features so peculiar to the British Empire, whose component parts are not geographically continuous or even contiguous, whose inhabitants speak different languages, are of different colours, belong to different races, worship at different shrines, have

Imperial  
Federation  
an attrac-  
tive ideal  
—nothing  
more.

adapted themselves to different climates, are animated by different ethical ideals, and have reached different stages of civilization, the ideal of Imperial Federation, however attractive, is impracticable. The history of the British Empire during the last century is the history of the evolution of the principle of self-government which leads on inevitably to the creation of a national consciousness and the development of nations. Had the conditions been otherwise, had they been such as obtained in the United States or in Germany, the British Empire may have, probably would have, become a Federation of powerful States. But the conditions were diverse. The United Kingdom, the self-governing Dominions and the dependencies are opposed to Imperial Federation. It will remain an ideal—nothing more. The British Empire will persist, growing in strength and grandeur, but it will consist of several puissant nations bound closely together by co-operative alliance.

# CHAPTER XIX

## PREFERENTIAL TRADE

WHATEVER the form of society is, tribal, municipal or national, the tie which binds its constituent parts most firmly together is the recognition of their economic interdependence. Strong as the bonds of sentiment may be, and undoubtedly are in the British Empire, they require to be confirmed by the consolidating force of material interests.

Consciousness of economic interdependence the true basis of organic union.

History clearly proves that foreign relations depend to a very large degree upon trade relations. The closest connexion must exist between Imperial Defence and Imperial Trade. The Britannic fleet has been created and maintained to protect Britannic commerce. Indeed there is a modern school of thinkers, of whom Mr. Angell is the most prominent, who have taught that a consciousness of economic interdependence is the truest guarantee of universal peace. This is, in effect, merely a restatement of the Cobdenite theory. The Father of Modern Free Trade, impelled by this great idea, negotiated a commercial treaty with France. In view of his ardent desire to tie this commercial knot, it is interesting to conjecture his attitude towards those proposals upon which his latest disciples triumph.

Close relation between foreign and trade relations.

phantly assert that they have banged, barred and bolted the door.<sup>1</sup> 'It is very difficult to see how you can pretend to deal with the great question of Imperial defence without having first dealt with the question of Imperial trade. If the people of this country and the people of the Colonies mean what they have been saying, and if they intend to approach the question of Imperial Unity in a practical spirit, they must approach it on its commercial side.'<sup>2</sup>

It may be, that, as Angell maintains, wars are futile. Nevertheless in the world as at present constituted they seem inevitable. As  
 Universal Free Trade an amiable dream. universal disarmament is eminently desirable but a most remote possibility, so universal Free Trade is the cosmopolitan fiscal policy which is ardently to be hoped for, but it, too, is far beyond the horizon of our vision. When the Manchester School abandoned the old Protective policy, they embraced Free Trade sincerely convinced that the world would recognize the wisdom of their action by its fruits and emulate their example. Experience, however, has demonstrated how vain was that hope. Apart from foreign nations, even the young nations within the confines of the Empire have adopted Protection as the economic expression of their nationalist faith.

Constant commercial warfare. We and foreign countries are keen rivals for the commerce of the world. Even in time of peace, as the world is at present conditioned, a lively commercial war is

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Churchill at Edinburgh, May 18, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Chamberlain in 1896, quoted in Jebb, *Imperial Conference*, vol. i, p. 306.

constantly raging. It is a battle of tariffs. But 'while A is very anxious to get the favour of B, and B is anxious to get the favour of C, nobody cares two straws about getting the commercial favour of Great Britain. In this great battle Great Britain has deliberately stripped herself of her armour and her weapons by which the battle is to be fought. You cannot do business in this world of evil and suffering on those terms. If you fight you must fight with the weapons with which those whom you are contending against are fighting.'<sup>1</sup>

While meeting flint with flint as far as foreign nations are concerned, the self-governing Dominions have thought that the principle that 'His Majesty's subjects, as such, have a community of material interests as distinguished from the rest of the world,'<sup>2</sup> should be definitely recognized by the adoption of preferential trade. The acceptance of this principle would involve a relaxation of the protective tariffs of the Dominions in favour of the manufactured articles of the mother country, and the abandonment by the United Kingdom of the fiscal expedient of Free Trade.

It has for long been felt that succeeding years only aggravate the divergence of the economic interests of the Empire and make reciprocal Preference of a real and useful character more difficult to arrange.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury, quoted in Jebb, *Imperial Conference*, vol. i, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Samuel Griffith, Colonial Conference, 1887, quoted in Jebb, *Imperial Conference*, vol. i, p. 63.



Denied trade advantages by the mother country, the members of the Empire might be strongly tempted to enter into agreements with other powers and thus loosen still further the bonds of Empire. Jan Hofmeyr was only the first of modern Imperialists to warn the Empire that where a colony's treasure is there would its heart be also. For many years, there had been an unlimited market in the United States for the sugar of the West Indies whose commercial interests had been so heartlessly ignored by the British Government. Of this market they had been unable to avail themselves owing to other treaties and obligations of the Empire, and there grew up amongst them a strong party who favoured annexation to the United States. 'When one's loyalty and one's attachment to the Empire are thus divided against one's self-interest, it is only reasonable to expect that one's attachment to the Empire is very likely to suffer.' <sup>1</sup>

Preferential Trade is the enabling condition of Imperial Unity. 'The establishment of commercial union throughout the Empire would not only be the first step but the main step, the decisive step, towards the realization of the most inspiring idea that has ever entered into the minds of British statesmen.' <sup>2</sup>

Anxious as the Dominions were to be favoured before foreign nations, they clearly insisted that they did not come to plead abjectly for any boon involving a sacrifice on the part of the British

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hofmeyr, Colonial Conference 1887, p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Chamberlain, quoted in Jebb, *Imperial Conference*, vol. i, p. 311.

consumer. They maintained that every British  
 Imperial Parliament was bound to consider its  
 Preference own citizens, its own industries and its  
 mutually own interests first. Whether they  
 beneficial. were excluded or favoured or placed on the  
 same footing as foreigners was entirely a matter  
 for the discretion of the United Kingdom. Were  
 their offers rejected, they were prepared to  
 acquiesce regretfully in the decision of His  
 Majesty's Government and safeguard their own  
 interests as circumstances might dictate.<sup>1</sup>

Their argument was that Preferential Trade  
 would be beneficial to the mother country. They  
 invited her co-operation that they might all  
 mutually participate in the accruing benefits. It  
 was a business proposition. In 1907 the Colonies  
 were the best customers of the old country, and,  
 if sufficient encouragement were given, would  
 continue so. If there were a falling off in foreign  
 trade consequent upon the adoption of the new  
 policy, it would be gradual and would be counter-  
 balanced by increased commercial intercourse  
 with the component members of the Empire.  
 Should foreigners attempt to retaliate, their fiscal  
 attacks would fall harmlessly on the combined  
 power of so self-sufficing an entity as the British  
 Empire.

They never intended that the policy they advo-  
 cated should cut the Empire off from trade with  
 foreign countries. Foreign trade was quite com-  
 patible with Imperial Reciprocity. But they did  
 maintain that foreign treaties should be condi-  
 tioned and limited by the network of interimperial  
 arrangements rather than that the imperial trade

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Deakin, Colonial Conference, 1907.*

system should be conditioned and limited by the net work of foreign treaties.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover the proletariat of the United Kingdom would profit immensely by the proposed change. The reasonable preference given to British manufactures would mean that millions of pounds' worth of trade, which was finding its way to foreign countries, would be deflected to Great Britain. The immediate consequence would be increased employment, and, if the demand were sufficiently keen, higher wages. With succeeding years the population of the Dominions would so increase that they would absorb more manufactured goods than foreign countries had ever required, a great stimulus would be given to British manufacturing, and employers and employed alike would benefit by a policy which at the same time cemented the component parts of the Empire more closely together.

These arguments were cordially endorsed by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, to whose energy, enthusiasm, and eloquence the imperial movement owes so much. He was convinced that the future vitality of the United Kingdom depended upon the immediate adoption by Great Britain of the offer of the Dominions. 'The maintenance of your trade,' he pointed out to his audience in the course of his famous speech at Glasgow on October 6, 1903, 'is dependent entirely on British possessions. While to these foreign countries your export of manufactures has declined £46,000,000, to your British possessions it has increased £40,000,000.' 'That trade remains at the present time the most rapidly increasing,

Mr. J.  
Chamber-  
lain's  
strenuous  
advocacy.

<sup>1</sup> Jebb, *Imperial Conference*, vol. ii, p. 194.

the most important, the most valuable of the whole of our trade.' 'In the United Kingdom trade has been practically stagnant for thirty years. Meanwhile the protected countries have progressed in a much greater proportion than ours. We have reached our highest point. If our imperial trade declines we decline. It will decline unless, while there is time, we take the necessary steps to preserve it.'

As far as he could see the outlook for British trade was distinctly gloomy. In a mood which Dismal subsequent statistics have proved un-  
outlook warranted he continued, 'I see signs  
for British of decay. I see cracks and crevices  
trade. in the walls of the great structure. I know that the foundations upon which it has been raised are not broad enough or deep enough to sustain it. It is not well to-day with British industry.' To his mind Imperial trade was essential if England were not to sink into a fifth-rate nation.

He thought that England should enter at once into reciprocal trade relations with the Dominions. In return for a very moderate prefer-  
Preferen- tial Trade  
essential to  
England's  
commercial  
pros- perity. ence, they were prepared to give the United Kingdom substantial advantages. Assured of such a widening market, a permanent stimulus would be applied to British industry, and the relations between the mother country and 'the sister Nations' would be more clearly defined and more firmly established. He urged his fellow citizens of the United Kingdom to endorse this 'arrangement between friends,' this 'negotiation between kinsmen,' by which both sides were to gain and neither to lose. They were at the parting of the ways.

As we have already observed, the Dominions gave expression to the faith that was in them by making substantial reductions in the tariffs in favour of the manufactures of the United Kingdom. When the dominant tendencies throughout the Empire seemed centrifugal in character, they became convinced that Preferential Trade was the true basis of Imperial Unity, and they have consistently striven to realize their ideal. Advances of this character must be reciprocated if they are to be sustained, but the Dominions have received no encouragement from the mother country either to continue or to increase the advantages they have conferred.

The political parties of Great Britain have been averse to granting any preference to colonial produce in British markets. When the Conservatives might have taken advantage of the light duty imposed on corn and flour to meet the extraordinary expenditure due to the Boer war and have granted a slight preference to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as a practical mark of sympathy with the vital principle which they so ardently espoused, they refused to avail themselves of the opportunity. If they thought the revenue derived from the tax indispensable, as in fact it was not, they might easily have balanced the loss sustained by exempting the produce of the Dominions from its provisions, by raising the duty on foreign produce.

But rather than avail themselves of this agency of Imperial Union, this professedly Imperial

Preference  
given the  
United  
Kingdom  
by the  
Dominions.

The atti-  
tude of the  
political  
parties in  
Great  
Britain  
towards  
Preferen-  
tial Trade.

(a) The  
Conserva-  
tives.

Government found they could dispense with the revenue thus derived and abolished the duty. The comment of Mr. Chamberlain and his subsequent action are significant. 'What did I ask of you,' he wrote to the Duke of Devonshire, 'before I went to South Africa? That you should retain the shilling duty and give a drawback to Canada. I thought you had all, except Ritchie, accepted this policy. While I was slaving my life out, you threw it over as of no importance.'<sup>1</sup> In the following year, at the age of sixty-seven, with that splendid courage which always characterized him, he entered the political wilderness to preach the gospel of Preferential Trade.

Such a deliberate rebuff was hardly encouraging to the Dominion Governments. Since its debacle in 1906 the Unionist Party have been in opposition. Pledged as they now are to tariff reform, the Dominions might reasonably expect some preferential treatment in the event of their accession to office. And yet, judging from the contradictory statements of Mr. Bonar Law at the Albert Hall and later at Ashton-under-Lyne, the ideas of that party as to the best fiscal policy for the Empire are somewhat chaotic. But the

(b) The Liberals. Liberal Party, under the strong leadership of Mr. Asquith, at present hold the reins of power and it is of importance to try and understand their objections to Preferential Trade.

Reasons for their Opposition. That policy has been discredited to some extent by the fallaciousness of Mr. Chamberlain's predictions in 1903 upon which

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Contemporary Review*, August 1914.

he based his plea for the support of his fiscal policy. His diagnosis of the causes of the stagnation of British trade between 1872 and 1903 was correct, but his prophecy was woefully wrong.

(a) The fallaciousness of Mr. Chamberlain's predictions. 'We have reached our highest point,' he declared; 'I see the signs of decay.' And yet, in 1912, statistics proved that British trade was exceptionally buoyant, while her oversea trade was greater than ever before.

Whilst between 1872 and 1902 British exports increased by only £22,000,000 or 9 per cent., between 1882 and 1912 they increased by no less than £238·4 millions or 99 per cent. The United Kingdom exported no less than £157,000,000 worth of British manufactured goods more in 1912 than ten years before. These astonishing figures reduce Mr. Chamberlain's forebodings to absurdity. Exultant Free Traders, celebrating the obsequies of Tariff Reform, naturally hurl them triumphantly at their Protectionist opponents as an incontrovertible if prosaic vindication of the wisdom of their fiscal policy. In the face of such facts they refuse to believe that there is any necessity to cultivate colonial markets as an offset to the detrimental effects of the fiscal barriers of protected countries upon the demand for their manufactures.

(b) Imperial Preference would impose a tax on foreign foodstuffs and foreign raw materials. Furthermore, the pith and marrow of the Liberal Party's resistance to Preferential Trade is summed up in Mr. Asquith's dictum 'You cannot give a Preference unless you impose a duty on foreign foodstuffs and foreign raw materials. There is no way under heaven by which the thing can be done except that.'

Imperial preference, it is maintained, is tantamount to a tax on food and on those raw materials which are the life blood of the great manufacturing centres which afford employment to thousands of British workers. The Dominions are reminded of the 13,000,000 in the United Kingdom who are on the verge of hunger and steeped in unendurable poverty. Labour members, scared by the same bogey, have appealed to their compatriots in Australia to vote against the party led by Mr. Deakin which favoured Imperial Preference.

A careful study of the statements of the champions of Preferential Trade makes it evident that the Free Traders have invented arguments which they have demolished to their entire satisfaction. The Prime Ministers of the Dominions and Mr. Chamberlain emphatically declared that they did not suggest a preferential tariff affecting raw materials, which are so necessary to Britain's manufacturing trade. 'I repeat in the most explicit terms,' said Mr. Chamberlain, 'that I do not propose a tax on raw materials.' Repeatedly and consistently the representatives of the Colonies denied the misstatements that they demanded a duty on raw materials. 'A great manufacturing country such as Great Britain,' said Sir William Lyne,<sup>1</sup> 'would be mad to impose a tax on raw materials from which she manufactured her goods for export. Such a thing had not been suggested by the Colonial representatives and it created a very bad impression to find a member of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jebb's *Imperial Conference*, vol. ii, p. 185.



the Government [Mr. Asquith] repeating this fiction.'

Mr. Chamberlain did propose a tax upon food and the Dominions' representatives did anticipate that if a preference were given it would be upon the foodstuffs with which they supplied the English market. But the former intended to accompany this tax by such a remission of duties that not only would the agricultural labourer gain 2*d.* a week and the town artisan 2½*d.* per week, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer would benefit to the extent of £6,000,000 per year, which might be used for the further reduction both of taxes on food and also of some other taxes which pressed most hardly on different members of the community.<sup>1</sup>

The Prime Ministers of the Dominions were quite alive to the interests of the British proletariat. Responsible themselves for much social legislation in their dominions which was calculated to improve the working conditions and add to the comfort of the wage-earners, they were quick to notice the desperate economic position of the British workmen and were naturally in sympathy with their desire to raise their standard of life. Their political faith and their human sympathies forbade them to countenance any proposal likely to be detrimental to the great masses. 'If I thought it was going to injure the masses of the people of this country,' said Sir Joseph Ward, 'I for one would not be favourable to it.'<sup>2</sup> He expressed the general opinion of the Representatives from the Dominions.

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Glasgow, October 1903.

<sup>2</sup> *Colonial Conference* 1907, p. 280.

The fundamental point upon which the British Ministers and those who favour Preferential Trade have differed has been as to the incidence of the new duties. The former have maintained that it would fall ultimately upon the British consumer, the latter have declared that 'the experience of the Empire was conclusive against the *a priori* assertion of the British Free Traders that the small and differential duties proposed to be placed on articles of which the British supply is very large and expansive would finally come to rest on the price in the British market.' This experience is confirmed by the teaching of such economists as J. S. Mill and Professor Sidgwick who agreed that of any tax upon imports, especially if the tax be moderate, a portion at any rate is paid by the foreigner. As Mr. Deakin has argued, the competition amongst those to whom the preference is given, suppliers within the United Kingdom itself, and the foreigner who would be content with a smaller profit rather than relinquish his hold on the market, would keep down prices. Further, since the foreign produce would only be gradually displaced by the colonial, there would be no sensible variation in the amount imported, and, therefore, if the supply remained constant, there is no sufficient reason why prices should rise. The only very remote danger is that the sellers from the Dominions and within the United Kingdom might combine to adjust the market to suit their monetary interests, but that is highly improbable.

Moreover, the increased demand for colonial produce would expand the primary industries in

Opposing  
conceptions  
of the  
theory of  
incidence.

the various Dominions, encourage more intensive and scientific cultivation and justify the provision by the State of such means of transport as would facilitate and cheapen the dispatch of the products. Instead of an enhanced selling price as a result of preference, the cost of production would be reduced.

Finally there is the convincing testimony of the Dominion Prime Ministers. Sir Joseph Ward has stated<sup>1</sup> that 'The result of a preference to British goods imported into New Zealand, from information furnished to the Government Department in New Zealand has not brought about an increase in the price of those articles to the consumers in New Zealand. On the contrary, the increased opportunity for competition between British traders by having a preference, by putting a duty against foreign countries, has kept the price of those articles down.' The Canadian Ministers likewise have declared that the effect of the Preference they have given Great Britain has been to compel foreign competitors to lower their prices in order to counterbalance the handicap imposed upon them.

Such evidence confirms the economic theory that in the event of preference being granted on the scale and under the conditions proposed by the Dominions, the incidence of the new taxation would fall not upon the consumer but upon the producer. With that theory the spokesmen of the Liberal Party have absolutely disagreed.

Again, the Liberal Party are pledged to Free Trade. Mr. Asquith informed the Conference of

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Conference 1907.*

1907 that 'a Free Trade basis means a system in which duties are imposed for revenue, and not for other purposes.' The Cape proposal, that a preference should be given to their wines, would divert duties to ulterior purposes. It would be 'a flagrant and undeniable departure from the very basis of our principle of Free Trade.' Although he declared that Free Trade was only a fiscal expedient of proved utility, he was not convinced that the moment had arrived to abandon it.

His colleague, Mr. Lloyd George, at the same Conference, almost admitted the soundness of the Preferentialists' position. He heartily agreed with them that the Empire would be a great gainer if many of the products now purchased from foreign countries could be produced and purchased within the Empire. 'The Federation of free Commonwealths,' he declared,<sup>1</sup> 'is worth making some sacrifice for. One never knows when its strength may be essential to the great cause of human freedom, and that is priceless.' On behalf of the Board of Trade he 'acknowledged the enormous advantage conferred on the British manufacturer by the preference given to him in the Colonial markets by recent tariff adjustments.' He admitted that the preferential tariff of Canada had produced a marked effect on the British export trade, and expressed his conviction 'that in some measure the happy results which have ensued from the Canadian preference will be repeated in the case of the other Dominions.' Although he maintained that the policy of economic interdependence was

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jebb, *Imperial Conference*, vol. ii, p. 236.

impossible in view of the mother country's primary needs, he remarked, in reply to an interjection that the corn duty of 1902 had no apparent effect on the price, that he would not be a bit surprised if that were a fact. Nevertheless he summed up in support of his party's attitude.

Finally the Imperial Government seems to have suspected that the Dominions were attempting to determine their domestic policy and were not respecting their national autonomy. They resented such interference, but, in point of fact, they had practically no grounds for their suspicions. Dr. Jameson<sup>1</sup> had certainly gone so far as to say that 'although it may be presumptuous for some one from abroad to attempt to influence the people in this country, I venture to say it is our duty, if we can, to influence them, even at the cost of being considered presumptuous.' But, at the beginning of the discussion in 1907, Mr. Deakin was careful to point out that the liberty of any state to adopt the fiscal policy which the majority of its people accepted was inviolable. There could be no friction. Preferential Trade 'must yield advantage and of the value of that advantage each party must be the judge.' To that proposition Mr. Asquith entirely assented as it admirably stated the case.

Out of the welter of literature which has been written on this vital imperial question during the past thirty-seven years this supremely important fact emerges conspicuously. The national autonomy of the component members of the Empire must remain inviolate. As Sir Wilfrid

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Conference* 1907, p. 282.

(d) Jealous  
regard  
for the  
national  
autonomy  
of the  
United  
Kingdom.

No arrangement possible which does not respect the national autonomy of the component parts of the Empire.

Laurier very truly observed in 1911,<sup>1</sup> 'the commercial relations which exist to-day between the different parts of the British Empire, the mother country, and the Dominions, have been very much the result of haphazard, and never the consequence of any initial movement on the part of anybody or of a regular review of the situation as it exists in the different countries.' Each of the

nations within the Empire has gone its own way. Great Britain has preferred Free Trade, the self-governing Dominions have adopted Protection. To their respective fiscal systems they have become definitely committed and recognize the right of no outside body to suggest what their fiscal policy should be.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom has laid it down that<sup>2</sup> 'in regard to matters of policy we are, and must remain, our own masters. Nor do we seek advice; nor would it be fitting for anybody outside to tender us advice in regard to large questions either of domestic or of Imperial policy.' He considered it 'a most happy arrangement' that each part of the Empire has been left free and autonomous in the matter of its fiscal policy, and entirely concurred in the opinion of the Prime Ministers of the Dominions that the national states should be allowed to pursue that fiscal policy which the majority of their fellow countrymen thought best suited to the requirements of their particular unit.

He welcomed Sir Wilfrid Laurier's practical

<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

proposition that a peripatetic Commission 'representing the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland should be appointed with a view of investigating and reporting upon the natural resources of each part of the Empire represented at the Conference, the development attained and attainable, and the facilities for the production, manufacture and distribution; the trade of each part with the others and with the outside world, the food and raw material requirements of each, and the sources thereof available;' <sup>1</sup> and by what methods, consistent with the existing fiscal policy of each part, the trade of each part with the others may be improved and extended. Such inquiries must reveal very clearly the inexhaustible resources which might be exploited in the interests of the Empire.

The appointment of an Imperial Trade commission.

The members of this Commission were not empowered to criticize the wisdom of the existing fiscal policies of the United Kingdom or the self-governing Dominions, but their investigations could only further emphasize the merits of Imperial Preference.

Free Trade the lion in the path.

Free Trade is the lion in the path which must be slain. The electors of the United Kingdom have yet to be convinced that the unity of the Empire, which, proportionately, will be of greater value to them than to the Dominions as time goes on, can only be permanently secured by the adoption of some system of preferential trade, which would swell the stream of revenue coming into the Imperial exchequer, extend the basis of taxation, and assist English agriculture.

<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Conference* 1911, p. 340.

But the goal can only be approached little by little. No full and elaborate scheme of preferential trade would command that support of the democracies of the 'Sister States' which is the first condition of its adoption. No policy of 'the whole or none' can succeed. Success can only be achieved if the preliminary negotiations are conducted in a spirit of generous compromise. If the price is too high, the people of Great Britain will simply refuse to pay it regardless of the consequences. If on the other hand, due moderation and wisdom support the counsels of the advocates of Imperial Preference in the United Kingdom, it might reasonably be hoped that this enabling condition of imperial unity, which respects the principle of autonomy, is in harmony with the spirit of nationalism, and assures the durability of a joint foreign policy, and, consequently, unanimity of opinion in the event of war, will be conceded by all, as it now is by the majority of the component parts of the Empire—the members of the Britannic alliance of tomorrow.

A goal  
to be  
approached  
slowly  
and in the  
spirit of  
com-  
promise.



# CHAPTER XX

## THE LAST PHASE

IF we regard the British Empire as a large family, we are immediately struck by the cordial relations which now subsist between its various members. As we might naturally expect, we find the children for whom the parent has done so much and to whom, as they attained their majority, she has conceded powers co-equal with their new dignity, acknowledging their indebtedness and their gratitude in the natural way by spontaneously and enthusiastically hastening to her support when she is threatened by powerful enemies.

The goodwill of the Crown Colonies may be traced directly to good government. Mr. Harcourt recently declared that his duties had ceased to be a labour and had become an obsession of irresistible fascination. Making due allowance for human frailties, it must be admitted that the highly trained body of officials, who administer the affairs under the control of the Colonial Office, have ruled justly, honestly, and strongly.

The self-governing Dominions could have no substantial grievance since they have been practically allowed to please themselves, and have received substantial advantages by remaining within the imperial fold. The mother country

is no longer superior, they are no longer subordinate. The 'Sister States' of the Empire now take counsel together on the basis of equality. The United Kingdom is awakening to a realization of the fact that she must keep the Dominions with her if she is to hold her own as a nation; the Dominions are profoundly grateful for the liberal and generous treatment they have received at her hands; each member responds to the call of their common race, none is without the strong strain of conservatism which would strenuously oppose any radical alteration of existing relations. Two motives only, one sentimental, the other practical, might actuate the Dominions to seek separation. In the first place there is within them a desire of growing intensity to control their external as well as their internal affairs and appear amongst the other nations as sovereign powers. Secondly, there is the fear that they might be called upon to meet liabilities contracted as a result of the pursuit of a policy in the determination of which they have had no voice.

The Imperial Government has recognized that these aspirations are prompted by the spirit which has determined the evolution of the Empire, and has made some advances to gratify them. When at the meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1909, after hearing Sir Edward Grey's startling declaration that it would be necessary to build a new fleet more powerful than any the United Kingdom then had, the Australian representatives stated that the Commonwealth favoured an Australian

fleet, His Majesty's advisers at once courteously agreed to place the experience and technical knowledge of the experts at the Admiralty at the disposal of the Australian Government. This was a gracious recognition of the national sentiment of the Dominions.

It was certainly contrary to all strategical principles to break the fleet up into many scattered units, but it was felt that considerations other than those of strategy must be taken into account when defining the naval policy of the Empire as at present constituted. And yet subsequent events have proved how very difficult it is for the Imperial Government to gratify the national aspirations of the Dominions and at the same time ensure the security of the Empire.

In 1909 it was agreed that Imperial interests in the Pacific were to be protected by a fleet consisting of units belonging to Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The New Zealand Government preferred to make a contribution of £100,000 a year and pay for a first-class cruiser which was to assist in the formation of one of the units supplied by Great Britain.

In 1914, Australia alone had carried out her part of the agreement. The Canadian fleet did not exist, if we except the cruisers *Niobe* and *Rainbow* purchased by Sir Wilfrid Laurier before his pact with Mr. Taft encompassed his political destruction; the *New Zealand* was patrolling home waters, and the British units in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific were not. The Australian Government was naturally alarmed

The  
Agreement  
of 1909  
condemned  
by naval  
strategists.

Australia  
alone has  
honoured  
the agree-  
ment of  
1909.

and dismayed by the 'definite non-fulfilment by the Admiralty of the obligations undertaken in 1909' and 'the destruction of the basis upon which the Royal Australian Navy was organized.'

Canada's failure to fulfil her part of the contract can be understood in view of Mr. Borden's political success, but the Imperial Government would seem at first sight to have been guilty of a gross breach of faith. In reality, however, they were paying the penalty of a serious miscalculation rather than wilfully dis-

Explana-  
tion of  
the failure  
of Canada  
and Great  
Britain to  
fulfil their  
obliga-  
tions.

regarding their obligations to the self-governing Dominions. When they entered into the compact in 1909, they reckoned without the constant shifting of the storm pressure in the international world. While, in view of the Japanese Alliance of 1911, it was obviously unnecessary from the purely naval point of view to establish fleet units on the Indian and Far Eastern Stations, the German Navy Bill of 1912 and the rapid growth of the German fleet rendered it imperative that the Imperial fleet should be concentrated in Home waters. In obedience to the sound strategic principle that the naval strength should be 'concentrated in the decisive theatre for the decisive event,' the Admiralty entrusted their interests in the Pacific and Mediterranean almost exclusively to the Japanese and French Governments.

Mr. Churchill's argument in defence of this policy is convincing. 'The safety of Australia and New Zealand,' he declared, 'is secured by the naval power,' and the alliances based on the naval power, of Great Britain. No European State would,

Mr.  
Churchill's  
argument.

or could, invade or conquer New Zealand or Australia unless the British Navy had been destroyed. The same naval power of Great Britain in European waters also protects New Zealand and Australia from any present danger from Japan. . . . The situation in the Pacific will be absolutely regulated by the decision in European waters. Two or three Australian and New Zealand Dreadnoughts, if brought into line in the decisive theatre, might turn the scale and make victory not merely certain but complete. The same two or three Dreadnoughts in Australian waters would be useless the day after the defeat of the British Navy in Home waters. Their existence would only serve to prolong the agony without altering the course of events. Their effectiveness would have been destroyed by events which have taken place on the other side of the globe, just as surely as if they had been sunk in the battle. The Admiralty are bound to uphold and proclaim the broad principles of unity in command and in strategic conceptions, and of concentration in the decisive theatre, and for the decisive event.'

But despite its cogency, this argument does not satisfy the Australians. It involves, to quote

A cogent  
argument  
but un-  
satisfactory  
to Aus-  
tralians.

Senator Millen's words, 'an interpretation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which Australia does not accept.'

Moreover it seems to be the outcome of ideas which are the negation of the Australian policy of Dominion fleet units. Present events undoubtedly vindicate the wisdom of the Admiralty's action. Our future as a nation and an Empire will undoubtedly be determined in the North Sea and on the battle-fields of

Europe. Nevertheless Mr. Churchill deserves the severest censure for announcing, to Mr. Churchill's culpable mistake. quote Senator Millen again, 'a vital departure in many important respects from a policy agreed upon between the Dominions and the Imperial Parliament without any previous consultation with or even preliminary notification to the Governments of the Dominions.'

Moreover the international friends of to-day are the enemies of to-morrow. If a strong European power and an Asiatic power were to declare war on the British Empire simultaneously, what would be the immediate fate of Australia and New Zealand were there no British fleet equal in strength to possible hostile fleets in the Pacific? Or, even were Japan to declare war against England, how would the United Kingdom fare during the absence of the British fleet if a European power wished to have revenge; and, moreover, what would be the condition of that fleet by the time it reached the theatre of war?

Rightly or wrongly, the people of Australia, New Zealand, and British Columbia, fear that their lands may be peacefully penetrated or roughly seized by a strong Asiatic power seeking to expand. Were they to suffer, the immense British interests in the East India Archipelago would not be spared. Obviously then the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have interests of increasing magnitude in the Pacific. Moreover Australia is definitely committed to her naval policy. The Minister for Defence in New Zealand, Mr. Allen, has recently declared that too much reliance is being placed

The in-  
security of  
inter-  
national  
agreements.

The Asiatic  
peril.

The na-  
tionalist  
sentiment  
demands  
Dominion  
fleets.

on the Japanese Alliance as a substitute for a fleet stationed in Far Eastern waters, and that a more satisfactory position is only to be attained by the inception of naval training and a naval organization in New Zealand on national lines; in Canada it is apparent that the Liberal Party are bent on having a Canadian fleet and that Mr. Borden's naval proposals will never pass the Canadian Senate unless it is purged of its Liberal members or their weight is outbalanced by the adoption of some Radical measure. And, furthermore, the exploits of the Australian Navy have stirred anew the desire in the Canadians and the inhabitants of the other self-governing Dominions to possess their own navies.

Obviously the only policy, which is consonant with the nationalist aspirations of these Dominions and may be calculated to allay their fears, is one which supports the creation of Australian, New Zealand and Canadian Navies growing as these Dominions grow and working in co-operation with the units maintained by the Imperial Government to safeguard their interests in the Far East, for the common advantage of the Empire. The question of organization, of the standardization of armaments, of similarity of training, of interchange of the personnels and of the supremacy of command are details which can be worked out after it is recognized once for all that the principle of co-operative alliance must form the basis of any durable arrangement between the mother country and the 'Sister States.'

This supremely important question of Imperial

British  
interests in  
the Pacific  
must be  
guarded by  
a British  
fleet com-  
posed  
of units  
belonging to  
the United  
Kingdom  
and the  
Dominions  
working  
in co-  
operation.

Defence is closely allied to the equally important question of an imperial foreign policy. Since they must discharge the liabilities incurred in the pursuit of that policy, the Dominions feel that they should co-operate with the mother country in laying down the general principle by which it is governed.

The desire of the Dominions to have a voice in the determination of the Imperial Foreign Policy.

A distinct advance was made in 1911, when, without the slightest reservation, they were informed about the secrets of the international situation and Great Britain's policy in relation thereto. Moreover they were promised that henceforth they would be consulted in matters which immediately affected their interests. But they are not satisfied with these concessions. As partners, albeit junior partners, in the Imperial business, they rightly consider that no question of foreign policy of any moment can arise which does not materially affect their interests.

The advance in 1911.

Conscious of the disparity in the magnitude of the interests of the United Kingdom as compared with those of the Dominions, the Imperial Government are opposed to any sharing of their supreme authority in such grave matters as the conduct of foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, and indeed all those delicate negotiations with foreign powers which a first-class power is constantly conducting. The representatives of the Dominions have been and are invited to the meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence, but they attend, together with naval and military experts, to advise the Prime Minister of the

Unwillingness of the Government of the United Kingdom to share its authority.

The unsatisfactory character of the Committee of Imperial Defence.



United Kingdom rather than to discuss with him, as the responsible Heads of co-ordinate national Governments, the imperial problem, and to frame an imperial foreign policy. A Committee of this character, meeting at irregular intervals, composed of those whom the Prime Minister may invite to attend, and discussing in secret, under his presidency, subjects on which if the opinions of the representatives of the Dominions be contrary to those of the Ministers of the United Kingdom, they can never be made public, cannot meet with the approval of the oversea democracies.

If the foreign policy of the Empire is to be one, it must be determined in manner agreeable to the

Foreign  
policy  
of the  
Empire  
must be  
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agreeable  
to the  
principle of  
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equality.

principle of Britannic equality. The only solution, which is compatible with the principles underlying the evolution of the Empire, requires that the whole subject should be fully discussed at meetings of the Imperial Conference, held if necessary at shorter intervals than at present. The main outlines of

the Empire's foreign policy could be fixed then and there. Its details might be worked out by the Imperial Foreign Office working in collaboration, if need be, with the High Commissioners of the Dominions, who, like the Ambassadors of Foreign Powers, would keep in close and constant touch with the Governments to which they were responsible.

Reassured by past experience we may trust to the future for the happy solution of our Imperial problems. England's colonial policy has been essentially dynamic. We have traced a gradual growth, a constant development under the nurturing influence of Liberty.

Past ex-  
perience  
augurs well  
for the  
future.

The difficulties that lie ahead cannot be minimized. Apart from the aspirations of the self-governing Dominions and the United Kingdom's jealousy of its prestige, existing problems are further complicated by the presence of thousands of coloured British subjects in the Crown Colonies. As we have observed, the British Government has learned by experience the wisdom of Lord Grey's advice that the native administration, the tribal economic system, and the native laws should be interfered with as little as possible. The present policy, therefore, is to develop the native organizations rather than to impose upon these coloured aboriginals those political, economic and social ideas which are peculiarly adapted to Britons.

Modern science has materially assisted the growth of an imperial spirit by reducing the distance between the component parts of the Empire. Greater intercourse between its various members is and will continue to become more easy. The interchange of opinions, the impact of minds on minds has been facilitated and should bring about a fuller understanding, deeper sympathy and greater confidence. The future organization of the Empire may be left to full and responsible discussions at subsequent imperial conferences at which the Prime Ministers of the Democracies, while respecting that local autonomy of each national state which the spirit of England's colonial policy has sanctified, will earnestly work together for the good of that greater unity in which they are units.